I
The Motivation Behind This Work

This book is not one with a political agenda. It is meant neither to support nor to critique any contemporary regimes or policies.[1] Indeed, the driving force behind this work is much greater and more important than that. It has to do with, first, the religion of Islam as preached by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself and, second, with the honor and rights of an individual Muslim, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

The name Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab (and correspondingly "Wahhabis" and "Wahhabism") has been heard quite often throughout both the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds during the past two centuries. In reality, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab is not a man who is "shrouded in mystery." His writings, as well as the writings of his closest students and descendents, are well-known and easily available today in virtually any part of the world. Although he is not shrouded in mystery what has been said about him over the years has definitely been filled with both fact and fiction.

Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was both a fellow human being and a fellow Muslim. As such, he has the right to be studied in an impartial and objective manner. That is, he has the right to a "fair trial." No matter how much one may oppose his teachings, one does

[1] This means that many issues that are bandied about today must be considered beyond the scope of this particular work. However, once the critique of certain policies is tied into Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and what is called "Wahhabism," then one is no longer speaking about the critique of a certain country, people or group today. Now one is speaking about principles related to the religion. One then has to study whether those principles are truly part of Islam or not. If it is concluded that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was truly following the way of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), then the attacks upon ibn Abdul-Wahhaab are also attacks on the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the way of life he preached. For a Muslim, obviously, this makes this topic of utmost importance. In fact, it is incumbent upon Muslims to defend the honor and truth of their religion, their prophet and their brethren.

not have the right to wrong him. Indeed, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has warned,

الظلْم ظُلُمات يوم الْقيامة

"Wrongdoing [shall be] darkness on the Day of Resurrection." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) When speaking about another person, such as ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or his followers, one should remember the Prophet's teaching,

كُل الْمسلمِ على الْمسلمِ حرام دمه وماله وعرضه

"All of a Muslim is inviolable to every other Muslim, with respect to his blood, wealth and honor." (Recorded by Muslim.) One must also be cautious of the Prophet's warning,

اتقِ دعوةَ الْمظْلُومِ فَإِنه لَيس بينه وبين الله حجاب

"Beware of the supplication of the wronged for between him and Allah there is no barrier." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) Even if one wants to argue that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers are not to be considered Muslims, one should be wary of speaking untruths about them. A narration recorded by Ahmad specifically states,

اتقُوا دعوةَ الْمظْلُومِ وإِنْ كَانَ كَافرا فَإِنه لَيس دونها حجاب

"Beware of the supplication of the wronged, even if he be a disbeliever, for before it there is no barrier [that is, between it and Allah]."[1]

In all cases, impartiality, objectivity, scholarly integrity and fairness are to be expected from any Muslim. This must be true even

[1] Record by Ahmad. According to al-Albaani, this hadith is *hasan*. According to Hamzah Ahmad al-Zain, its chain is *hasan*. However, it should be noted that Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., simply say that its chain is weak. See Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami al-Sagheer* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1988), vol. 1, p. 84; Hamzah Ahmad al-Zain, footnotes to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad* (Cairo: Daar al-Hadeeth, 1995), vol. 10, p. 495; Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., footnotes to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imaam Ahmad* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risaalah, 1997), vol. 20, pp. 22-23.

when dealing with one’s enemies or one’s opponents. Allah has clearly instructed,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ كُونُوا۟ قَوَّٰمِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَآءَ بِٱلْقِسْطِ ۖ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ
شَنَـَٔانُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰٓ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا۟ ۚ ٱعْدِلُوا۟ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ
خَبِيرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

“O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as just witnesses; and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety. And fear Allah, for Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do” (*al-Maaidah* 8). Allah also says,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ كُونُوا۟ قَوَّٰمِينَ بِٱلْقِسْطِ شُهَدَآءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِكُمْ
أَوِ ٱلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ وَٱلْأَقْرَبِينَ ۚ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَٱللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا ۖ فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا۟
ٱلْهَوَىٰٓ أَن تَعْدِلُوا۟ ۚ وَإِن تَلْوُۥٓا۟ أَوْ تُعْرِضُوا۟ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

“O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor. Allah is a better protector to both (than you). So follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you avoid justice. And if you distort your witness or decline to give it, verily Allah is ever well-acquainted with all that you do” (*al-Nisaa* 135).

The above hadiths and verses should make any true believer shiver from speaking about others with words that are based on falsehood or filled with unfair or unjust statements.

In this work, an attempt has been made to present a fair and accurate presentation of the life and teachings of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. To accomplish this goal, conclusions were derived based only on the most historically and logically reliable, accurate, substantiated and proof-based sources -be they from Muslims or non-Muslims.

II
The Life of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab

Najd from the Time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) until the Time of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab[1]

Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab hailed from the land known as the Najd of al-Yamaamah. There is a difference of opinion concerning the exact limits of this Najd. Most commonly, though, it is described as being bordered by the Mountains of Shammar or by the Great Nafood Desert to the North, Hijaaz to the West, the desert land known as the "Empty Quarter" to the South and al-Dahnaa and al-Ahsaa to the East.[2]

Two other terms of note concerning that area are al-Aaridh and al-Yamaamah. (1) The term al-Aaridh (العـارض) has an old and a new meaning to it. The old meaning is that it refers to the Mountain of al-Yamaamah (Tuwaiq) lengthwise, which stretches from the North of Najd to its south, more than one thousand kilometers. The more modern usage is the area of al-Shuaib in Huraimilaa to the North until al-Kharaj or Riyadh and its surrounding areas to the South. This is the meaning of it when used by Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Hence, it is simply one portion of Najd.

(2) Al-Yamaamah (اليمامـة) is the heart of the entire Arabian Peninsula. Najd forms only a part of it. It includes what is currently called Najd as well as the land of Sudair (which includes al-Ghaat and al-Zilfi), the land of al-Washm, the land of al-Hautah and al-Hareeq, the land of al-Aflaaj and the land of Waadi al-Duwaasir.[3] (In previous times in Islamic history, this term included even more area than that.)

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[1] The religious situation in Najd at the time of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab will be dealt with in detail in the following chapter.
[2] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, *Rasaail al-Imaam Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab al-Shakhsiyyah: Diraasah Daawiyyah* (Riyadh:Daar Ishbeeliyaa,2000),vol.1,p. 36.
[3] See Abdul-Muhsin al-Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 39-40.

The political situation since the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): At the time of the appearance of Islam, the leadership of al-Yamaamah was in the hands of Hoodhah ibn Ali al-Hanafi and Thumaamah ibn Athaal al-Hanafi. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), while sending letters to different rulers calling them to embrace Islam, sent Sulait ibn Amr to these two rulers. These two had a very strong negative reaction to the invitation. In fact, Hoodhah continued to reject the message and died as a disbeliever. On the other hand, Thumaamah seems to have embraced Islam sincerely.

During "the Year of the Delegations", the delegation of the Tribe of Haneefah came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and embraced Islam. With respect to their wealth and their people, they were a source of strength for Islam. However, Musailamah al-Hanafi apostatized and claimed to be a prophet. Abu Bakr sent an expedition against them, headed by Khaalid ibn al-Waleed. They were able to defeat Musailamah and his supporters, thus restoring the land to the control of the Muslim state. Islam spread in the land. The Islamic governments gave it proper care and attention during the time of the rightly-guided caliphs, the Umayyads and the beginning of the Abbasids.[1]

The later Abbasids paid very little attention to this land, perhaps due to its lack of economic resources. Over time, it was part of the Abbasid caliphate in name only, with virtually no influence exerted by the caliphate over Najd. This phenomenon was also true for other parts of the Muslim world. This led to political separation and even revolutions. In 252 A.H.[2], Ismaaeel ibn Yoosuf revolted in the Hijaaz. The followers of Ismaael and his brother Muhammad al-Ukhaidhir were known as the Ukhaidhiriyoon (الأخيضريون). They were of the "moderate Shiite," known as Zaidis.[3] They ruled over Najd until they were defeated by the extremists Baatinite Qaraamitah in 317 A.H.

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[1] Abdul Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 50-51.

[2] Concerning the dates, "A.H." stands for "after Hijrah," while "C.E." stands for "Christian Era."

[3] In their call to prayers, they would say, "Muhammad and Ali are the best of men. Come to the best of deeds." See Mirfat bint Kaamil Usrah, *Ihtisaab al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab* (Riyadh: Daar al-Watan, 1998), p. 24.

After the defeat of the Ukhaidhiriyoon until the time of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, there appeared no unified rule over the land of Najd, such that historians paid that land but scarce attention. During the Ninth and Tenth Hijri Centuries, the Tribe of Jabar, the rulers of the Eastern part of the Peninsula, continually fought against the Bedouin tribes of Najd, mostly due to those tribes' raids on tribes loyal to the Tribe of Najar or attacks on trade caravans. The Tribe of Jabar did exert enough control over parts of Najd that the historian al-Samhoodi referred to them as the "chiefs" of Najd.[1] However, after the killing of Muqrin ibn Zaamil al-Jabari at the hands of the Portuguese in 928 A.H., each small local *ameer* would control his own people with no greater or more unified force in place.[2] Thus, by the time of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, Najd fell under the control of the small states and rulers coming out of Bahrain or small emirates in the area.

The Ottomans had been the seat of the Islamic Caliphate for some time by the Twelfth Hijri Century. In 923 A.H., when the Ottomans conquered Egypt, the Hijaz was added to their control, having been under the control of Egypt. The Ottomans wanted to spread their control further, partially to counter the expansion of the Portuguese. They gained control over Yemen and al-Ahsaa. Najd then became virtually surrounded by areas under Ottoman control.

In reality, though, the Ottomans never gave much thought to Najd and had no influence over Najd. In fact, an Ottoman government document recorded by Yameen Ali Effendi in 1018 A.H. (1609 C.E.) shows that the Ottoman state was divided into thirty-two "states" or "provinces." Of those, fourteen were Arab "states"; however, Najd was not included among them.[3] The historian Ameen Saeed wrote, "Every Shaikh or *Ameer* [in Najd] had complete independence in

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[1] See Abdullah al-Saalih al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab: Hayaatuhu wa Fikruhu* (Riyadh: Dar al-Uloom, n.d.), p. 9. This work is based on al-Uthaimeen's Ph.D. thesis from Edinburgh University in 1972.

[2] Abdul Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 51.

[3] Saalih ibn Abdullah al-Abood, *Aqeedah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab al-Salafiyyah wa Atharuhaa fi al-Alim al-Islaami* (Madinah: Maktabah al-Ghurabaa al-Athariyyah, 1996), vol. 1, p. 41.

running his land. He would not recognize the Turks nor would the Turks recognize him."[1]

It is true that in some parts of Najd, the names of the Ottoman caliphs would be invoked in the Friday Sermons, but beyond that there was virtually no contact between the two. In fact, due to other internal and external problems, the Ottomans had to give up control of both Yemen and al-Ahsaa. (In al-Ahsaa, the Tribe of Khaalid revolted against them in the year 1050 A.H.[2]) In sum, as Vassiliev described it, "Central and eastern Arabia became virtually independent from the Turks at the beginning of the seventeenth century when riots and sedition spread throughout the Ottoman empire."[3] Concerning foreign intervention and control (such as by the Persians, Portuguese, British and French), he later states, "Thus around the time that Wahhabism emerged, Arabia had largely been left to itself for several decades."[4]

There were other attempts to bring Najd under political control. In particular, the Sharifs of the Hijaaz and the Tribe of Khaalid in al-Ahsaa attempted to dominate the land. They were able to sometimes gain control over portions of Najd. In particular, the Tribe of Khaalid had a stronghold in the Mount of Shammar in the North and also the *Ameer* of al-Uyainah seemed to recognize their authority in a small way. However, as a whole, these attempts were essentially unsuccessful and Najd continued without any strong governing force.[5]

By the Twelfth Hijri Century, Najd was divided into many small and independent "city-states," each having their own *ameer* (passed down through the family) and being completely independent of the other states.[6] Al-Uyainah was under the control of the Family of

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[1] Quoted in Abdul-Azeez al-Abdul-Lateef, *Daawaa al-Munawieen li-Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab: Ardh wa Naqd* (Riyadh: Daar al-Watan, 1412 A.H.), p. 236.

[2] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 11. Abu-Hakima gives the year as 1080 A.H. and states that in reality Ottoman rule in al-Ahsaa also had been only nominal. See Ahmad Mustafa Abu-Hakima, *History of Eastern Arabia: The Rise and Development of Bahrain, Kuwait and Wahhabi Saudi Arabia* (London: Probsthain, 1988), p. 39.

[3] Alexei Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), p. 59.

[4] Vassiliev, p. 60.

[5] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 53-54.

[6] In addition, many cities had their own *mutawwa*s (مطـ وع). This is a word that has been bandied about quite a bit in the Western press of late, especially since the Gulf War. This was a common term and position that existed before the

Muammar (probably the strongest family in the region), al-Diriyyah under the Family of Saud, Riyadh under the Family of Dawaas, Haail under the Family of Ali, al-Qaseem under the Family of Hujailaan and the north of Najd under the Family of Shubaib. As a whole, the larger Tribe of Tameem was the strongest as many of its family branches just mentioned ruled many cities. Unfortunately, these different "city-states" often engaged in merciless feuds, devastating raids, plunder, battles and skirmishes, many times for very trivial reasons.[1]

The social situation: The Najdi society had Bedouins and city dwellers, with Bedouins making up the majority of the inhabitants.[2] Most of the people were from Arab tribes. Some were originally non-Arabs (coming through slavery or via Hajj caravans). Najd was still very much a tribal society. It was also, to a great extent, a lawless society, wherein blood feuds and raids were commonplace. The Bedouin tribes had their chiefs, often times chosen for his ability to preserve the tribe under harsh desert conditions. These tribes would, in general, look down upon the city dwellers. The city folk had their *ameers* (or rulers). Although hereditary, this position was usually taken by force or assassination and held via oppression.[3]

The economic situation: Economically the area was very poor in comparison with many other parts of the Muslim world at that time.

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time of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Different cities, such as al-Diriyyah, Tharmadaa, al-Majmaa and elsewhere were known to have their *mutawwa*s and on occasion Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would write to them. In fact, Sulaimaan ibn Suhaim, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's staunch opponent, was a *mutawwa* of Riyadh. This term referred to the educated or semi-educated person who taught the general masses and ignorant people although he himself may not have been a scholar. It also refers to anyone who adheres to obedience to Allah and has taken on a position of a religious nature, such as Imam, caller to prayer, judge and so forth. It comes from a root meaning, "volunteering," wherein the person voluntarily takes on these responsibilities. See Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 137.

[1] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, pp. 13-15; Abdul Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 52; Vassiliev, pp. 60-63.

[2] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 56.

[3] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, pp. 11-12; Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 41-42. Al-Uthaimeen (p. 15) describes the Bedouin tribes who chose their leaders based on ability as being more "democratic" than the city dwellers. He also notes that, for many reasons, the Bedouin chiefs were fairer and more just than the city *ameer*s. One possible reason for that was the fact that the city-dwellers' wealth is stationary and therefore he has to or is willing to put up with more injustice than the Bedouin, who can move with all of his possessions easily.

The land itself had very little to offer (although farming and livestock were their main sources of income). Furthermore, the harshness of the area did not lend itself to being a great trade route, although some trade routes did pass through it (such as the route from Yemen to Iraq). Difficult economic conditions can contribute greatly to problems of political stability, as different groups resort to various means to support themselves, such as raids against other tribes or against any caravans that may be passing through the area. The situation was made worse in the face of small or unequal amounts of rain driving people to look for other sources of income.[1]

The Family of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab

Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab comes from the well-known tribe of Tameem, mentioned in the hadith:

عن أبِي هريرةَ قَالَ ما زِلْت أُحب بنِي تميمٍ منذُ ثَلاث سمعت من رسولِ الله صلى اللهم علَيه وسلم يقُولُ فيهم سمعته يقُولُ هم أَشد أُمتي علَى الدجالِ قَالَ وجاءَت صدقَاتهم فَقَالَ رسولُ الله صلى اللهم علَيه وسلم هذه صدقَات قَومنا وكَانت سبِيةٌ منهم عند عائشةَ فَقَالَ أَعتقيها فَإِنها من ولَد إِسماعيلَ

Abu Hurairah said, "I have continued to love the Tribe of Tameem ever since I heard three statements from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) about them. I heard him say, 'They are the strongest of my Nation against the *dajjaal* (anti-Christ).' When their Zakat came, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'This is the zakat of my people.' Aishah had a slave-girl from them and he said, 'Free her for she is from the descendants of Ismaaeel.'" (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Many authors trace Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's lineage all the way back to the early Arab Adnaan. For the purposes here, it is

[1] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, pp. 12-13; Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 49.

sufficient to state that he was Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab ibn Sulaimaan ibn Ali.[1]

Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was born in al-Uyainah in 1115 A.H. (1703 or 1704 C.E.)[2] into the Family of Musharraf of the tribe of Tameem. Since the Tenth Hijri Century, this family was known for its religious scholars and leaders.[3]

Muhammad's grandfather Sulaimaan ibn Ali was probably the greatest scholar in Najd during the Eleventh Century. He was the judge of al-Uyainah and the religious reference concerning disputed fiqh issues for the other scholars in the area. His students included his sons Abdul Wahhaab, Ibraheem and Ahmad.[4] Ibraaheem was a scholar in his own right, writing a number of works and traveling to different areas to give religious rulings. However, he lived most of his life close to his brother Abdul Wahhaab.[5] Ahmad ibn Sulaiman and Ibraaheem's son Abdul Rahmaan were also known to be scholars.[6]

Finally, Muhammad's father Abdul-Wahhaab was also a scholar and a judge in al-Uyainah. He was specialized in fiqh and wrote some books on various fiqh topics. However, his status as a scholar never reached the level of his father Sulaimaan.[7] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's older brother Sulaimaan was also known to be a serious student.

Al-Uthaimeen notes that not much is stated in the early writings concerning the economic situation of Muhammad's family. He states that since Muhammad's father and grandfather were both judges, they should have been receiving decent wages, most likely being among the "upper middle class," having enough wealth for Muhammad's needs to be met and to allow him to concentrate on

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[1] For a discussion of some of the mistakes concerning the lineage of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, see al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 23.

[2] Many authors, especially many Western authors, made errors concerning both the date and the place of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's birth. For a review of their statements, see al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 25, fn. 3.

[3] For examples of such scholars, see al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 24.

[4] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, pp. 24-25. Also see Abdullah al-Bassaam, *Ulamaa Najd Khilaal Sitta Quroon* (Makkah: Maktabah al-Nahdhah al-Hadeethah, 1398 A.H.) vol. 1, p. 26.

[5] Al-Bassaam, vol. 1, p. 26.

[6] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 71.

[7] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 25.

learning at an early age.[1] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz further noted that, since Muhammad grew up in a family with religious prestige, he probably also benefited from those who came to the house from outside areas to discuss issues of a religious matter and the students who came to learn from the local judge.[2]

Thus Muhammad was born into a family well-known for its devotion to knowledge and learning. Most likely, this laid down a firm foundation for his future advances in learning and his dedication to the faith. In addition, the sources also state that he was very intelligent and had a strong memory. They describe him as not liking to waste his time in the games that the other children played. He memorized the Quran by the age of ten.[3] He studied with his father who was very impressed with his abilities, saying that he has benefited from his son Muhammad on some points.[4] He reached puberty around the age of twelve and his father found him qualified to be the Imam for the prayers and appointed him as such. His father then married him off at the age of twelve (not an uncommon age at that time and place) and gave him permission to perform the Hajj.[5] (He performed the Hajj, went to Madina, where he stayed for two months, and then returned to al-Uyainah.)

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab studied Hanbali fiqh with his father. In addition, he used to study books of *tafseer* (Quranic commentary) and hadith, as well as books on *tauheed* (Islamic monotheism).[6] He was known both to have a good memory as well as being quick in

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[1] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 25.

[2] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 72; al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 27.

[3] Hussain ibn Ghannaam, *Tareekh Najd* (Naasir al-Deen al-Asad, ed., 1982), vol. 1, p. 75. Husain ibn Ghannaam (d. 1225 A.H./1810 C.E.) was a Maliki scholar originally from al-Ahsaa region. He observed the development of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's call from its inception and was a follower of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. The first volume of his work on the history of Najd, *Raudhah al-Afkaar wa al-Afhaam*, reproduces many of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's own writings and letters. The second details the battles that took place from 1159 A.H. (1746 CE) to 1797. This work provides the best first-hand information concerning the life of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. The edition used here is that edited by Naasir al-Deen al-Asad, wherein he has modernized ibn Ghannaam's flowery wording and has also rearranged some of the work's parts.

[4] This statement from Muhammad's father has been reported on the authority of Muhammad's brother Sulaimaan in ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 75.

[5] About the letter that his father wrote about him,see ibn Ghannaam, vol.1, p.75.

[6] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 28.

transcribing.[1] In particular, he was drawn to the books of Ibn Taimiyyah and ibn al-Qayyim.[2] He personally transcribed many of the books of ibn Taimiyyah, and some of those manuscripts are still in existence at the British Museum.[3] The influence of those two great scholars on him became very obvious in his own writings and letters. Most likely it was through their works that he developed his great insight into the meaning of *tauheed* (Islamic monotheism) and the other aspects of beliefs, an insight that many who simply study fiqh may be lacking. This study must have made it very clear to him that the affairs of the Muslims around him were not proper in the light of the clear teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. However, the time was not yet for him to openly rebuke the wrongs that he had seen. That would have to come after he matured as a scholar and an individual. Hence, there is no clear sign that he took any major steps of reform in al-Uyainah during those early years.[4] Instead, he first sought to

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[1] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 76.

[2] The early sources are not clear as to exactly when ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was first exposed to and influenced by the teachings of ibn Taimiyyah and ibn al-Qayyim. Some say it was early in his life while in Najd while others state that it was after venturing to Hijaz or Basra. Abu Sulaimaan discusses this question in detail and concludes that he was first exposed to them in his youth while in Najd, as they were greatly respected scholars of the Hanbali past and the Najdi scholars had good connections with the Hanbali scholars of Syria. See Abdul-Wahhaab Abu Sulaimaan, "*Khasaais al-Tafkeer al-Fiqhi ind al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab*," in *Buhooth Nadwah Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab* (Riyadh: Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, 1991), vol. 1, 383-390. In any case, the influence of ibn Taimiyyah upon ibn Abdul-Wahhaab can be seen in many ways, in particular in ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings. Much of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's abridgement of *al-Insaaf* is actually ibn Taimiyyah's conclusions. Furthermore, in volume thirteen of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's collected writings, there is an entire work (which has been recently published on its own) consisting of the issues in which Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab summarized ibn Taimiyyahs's views from ibn Taimiyyah's various writings. This work touches upon topics such as *tafseer*, *aqeedah*, fiqh and so forth. See See Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat al-Shaikh al-Imaam Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab* (Collected by Abdul-Azeez al-Roomi, et al. Maktabah ibn Taimiyyah), vol. 13, pp. 11-199. Note that although this anthology of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's was not collected by him, it shall be herein referred to as "Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*."Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*,. Also see Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *135 Faaidah Lakhasuhaa Shaikh al-Islaam Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab min Fataawa Shaikh al-Islaam ibn Taimiyyah* (Riyadh: Daar al-Qaasim, 1421 A.H.), *passim*.

[3] Usrah, p. 93.

[4] Cf., Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 29.

increase his knowledge by following the established custom of traveling from one's area for the purpose of attaining knowledge.

Travels to Attain Knowledge

Traveling for the purpose of attaining knowledge has been a practice of Muslim scholars since the earliest days of Islam. Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was no exception. These travels probably had a great impact on Muhammad's thinking and intellectual development. It opened his mind to other areas, other practices and maybe even other ways of thinking. At the same time, though, it allowed him to witness firsthand the extent to which Muslim populations had strayed from the way of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).[1]

Al-Uthaimeen notes that two questions remain unanswered in the historical works about Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. The first concerns the exact year whence Muhammad began his travels. The second concerns exactly how long Muhammad stayed in different locations. He notes, for example, that no work states Muhammad's age when he left al-Uyainah. In any case, al-Uthaimeen concludes that he must have left al-Uyainah before reaching the age of twenty.[2]

After returning from his first Hajj and then studying with the scholars of his hometown, Muhammad again set out for Hijaaz.[3]

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[1] Uthmaan Ibn Bishr, *Unwaan al-Majd fi Tareekh Najd* (Riyadh: Daar al-Habeeb, 1999), vol. 1, p. 28, notes that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had already started to object to some of the innovations and heresies that he had seen but with no affect. Hence, he decided to travel to increase his knowledge and be in a better position to counter the evils in his society. Note that along with ibn Ghannam's work, Ibn Bishr's work forms the most important early and direct reference for the life of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. The author Uthmaan ibn Abdullah ibn Bishr (1210-1290 A.H./1793-1873 C.E.) was a prominent scholar and historian originally from Julaajil. His teachers include Ibraaheem ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He was an eyewitness to many of the events he covered after the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Vassiliev (p. 13) believes that ibn Bishr possibly never saw ibn Ghannaam's chronicle, although he was well aware of ibn Ghannaam himself. If this conclusion is true, it means that ibn Ghannaam and ibn Bishr provide two independent, historically-close sources for the life of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

[2] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 29.

[3] There is a clear discrepancy between what Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's grandson Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Hasan wrote and what ibn Bishr and ibn Ghanaam wrote concerning the route of Muhammad's travels. According to his

Perhaps, he still had memories of his pilgrimage and he wished to return to that land to increase his knowledge. He set out for Makkah and performed the Hajj again. It is said that he studied with the scholars of Makkah.[1] However, there seems to be no mention of whom he studied with while in Makkah.[2] This gives the impression that he did not study long there and, instead, he moved on to Madinah.

In Madinah, he was faced with an academic environment that was very much different from that of al-Uyainah. For example, in al-Uyainah, the emphasis of study was on Hanbali fiqh. In Madinah, on the other hand, scholars and students from all over the world were present. Different schools of fiqh as well as all of the other branches of Islamic sciences were taught there.

Muhammad studied under a number of scholars present in Madinah at that time. These scholars included Ali al-Daaghistaani and Ismaeel al-Ajalooni.[3] However, the scholars that Muhammad was definitely closest to were first Abdullah ibn Ibraaheem ibn Saif[4] and then later Muhammad Hayaat al-Sindi[5] (who, according to al-

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grandson, he first went to Basra, then to al-Ahsaa, then back to Basra and then to Madinah, making Madinah his last stop. Ibn Ghanaam and Ibn Bishr stated that he first went to Hijaaz. This seems to be strongest opinion and the view followed by the majority of the scholars. Cf., Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, pp. 29-30.

[1] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, pp. 20-21; Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 30.

[2] It seems that he did study with Abdullah ibn Saalim al-Basri. He was a Shafi'ee scholar who was the leading scholar of hadith at his time in the Hijaaz. Cf., Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 75.

[3] Later writers also stated that Muhammad studied with the great Hanbali jurist Abu al-Muwaahib al-Baali. However, according to al-Uthaimeen (*Shaikh*, p. 31) that does not seem to be correct since al-Baali died in 1126 A.H. Furthermore, al-Nadwi and others doubt whether ibn Abdul-Wahhaab studied with al-Daaghistaani, since al-Daaghistaani would have been quite young when ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was in Madinah. However, that is assuming that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab met with him on his first journey to Madinah, which may not have been the case. Cf., Masood al-Nadwi, *Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab Muslih Madhloom wa Muftara alaih* (1977), p. 39. On the other hand, Abood (vol. 1, p. 163-164) argues with evidence that the encounter was very possible between al-Daaghistaani and ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Allah knows best.

[4] Abdullah was of the Shamari tribe. His father had moved from al-Majmah to al-Madinah were Abdullah grew up and studied under its scholars. Abdullah also traveled to Damascus to study there and then he returned to teach in Madinah. He had a large and beneficial library, from which Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab benefited. He died in Madinah in 1140 A.H.See al-Bassaam,vol.2,p.505.

[5] Muhammad Hayaat ibn Ibraaheem al-Sindi was born in Sind province in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. After studying in Sind, he moved to Madinah to

Uthaimeen, had the greater impact on Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab). Al-Uthaimeen notes that these two had a great impact on Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's thinking at a time when he was still very impressionable. These two not only conveyed knowledge to Muhammad but they set him on his path as a reformer.[1]

The first one mentioned above, Abdullah ibn Ibraaheem, was a Hanbali jurist and a scholar of hadith. He passed on all of his works from al-Bali to Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, including all of the standard works of hadith and hadith commentaries traced back via chains to their original authors.[2] Both Abdullah and al-Bali were very much impressed with Ibn Taimiyyah and it is more than likely that Abdullah encouraged Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to read ibn Taimiyyah's works. Furthermore, Abdullah was well aware of the situation in Najd, having originally come from that area. He was able to discuss with Muhammad the many evil practices that the people of that land had fallen into. In fact, one time he asked ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, "Do you want to see the weapons that I have prepared for al-Majmaa [his family's original hometown]?" When ibn Abdul-Wahhaab replied, "Yes," Abdullah took him to a house wherein many books were stored and he said, "These are the weapons I have prepared."[3] This incident demonstrates that Abdullah, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's early teacher, knew that "weapons" were needed for the people of al-Majmaa in Najd, meaning that they had strayed and a strong tool would be needed to correct them. In a way, he showed ibn Abdul-Wahhaab that the strongest tool against their evil practices was

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continue his studies, later teaching there. He was a great scholar of hadith. He was also a Hanafi jurist and legal theorist. He authored a number of books, including *Sharh al-Targheeb wa al-Tarheeb* as well as a commentary on the *Forty Hadith of al-Nawawi*. He died in Madinah in 1163 A.H. See Khair al-Deen al-Zirkili, *al-Alaam: Qaamoos Taraajim li-Ashhur al-Rijaal wa al-Nisaa min al-Arab wa al-Mustamareen wa al-Mustashriqeen* (Beirut: Dar al-Ilm al-Malayeen), vol. 6, p. 111. Al-Sindi had a number of students who became great scholars and callers to Islam throughout the Muslim world (al-Uthaimeen, *Shaikh*, p. 34). (Note that some authors stated that he was the author of a brief commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Actually, that work was compiled by his teacher Muhammad ibn Abdul-Haadi al-Sindi.)

[1] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 31.

[2] Ahmad ibn Hajar Ali-Bootaami, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab: Aqeedatuhu al-Salafiyyah wa Dawatuhu al-Islaahiyyah wa Thana al-Ulamaa alaih* (Kuwait: al-Daar al-Salafiyyah, 1983), p. 16.

[3] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, pp. 28-29.

the true knowledge that should make clear to them the falsehood they were on and show them the way to the straight path.

It was Abdullah who introduced ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to al-Sindi and recommended him as a student. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and al-Sindi became very close and ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stayed with him for some time. Al-Sindi was a great scholar of hadith. He was also well known for repudiating innovations, objecting to polytheistic practices and calling to *ijtihaad*[1] (scholarly juristic reasoning)—all salient features of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's later teachings.[2] In fact, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's great grandson Abdul-Lateef ibn Abdul-Rahmaan said that al-Sindi had the greatest influence on ibn Abdul-Wahhaab with respect to *tauheed* of worship, freeing oneself from blind obedience (*taqleed*) and preoccupying oneself with the study of the Book and the Sunnah.[3]

Ibn Bishr records that one time Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was at the tomb of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), witnessing the people supplicating there and seeking refuge with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He then saw al-Sindi coming and he said to him, "What do you say about these people?" Al-Sindi responded with Allah's words,

إِنَّ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ مُتَبَّرٌ مَّا هُمْ فِيهِ وَبَٰطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ

"[Moses said,] 'Verily, these people will be destroyed for that which they are engaged in (idol-worship). And all that they are doing is in vain" (*al-Araaf* 139).[4]

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[1] For example, he lamented that the people were leaving authentic, non-abrogated hadith in favor of their schools of fiqh that had no *sanad* [chain of authority] for their views. He is quoted in Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 78.

[2] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, pp. 31-32; Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 77.

[3] Abdul-Lateef is quoted in Ismaaeel Muhamamd Al-Ansaari, "*Hayaat al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab wa Athaaruhu al-Ilmiyyah,*" in *Buhooth Nadwah Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab* (Riyadh: Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, 1991), vol. 1, p. 127.

[4] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 29. Due to the use of the pronouns, both scholars being referred to as "Shaikh" and both scholars being named Muhammad, who quoted that verse in this incident is not completely clear. Most authors simply record the report in its original vague form. However, some writers understood these words as being said by Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and others by al-Sindi. For example, Naseer explicitly states that it was al-Sindi who responded with that verse of the Quran while al-Umar and al-Ruwaishid explicitly states

Return to al-Uyainah and Travels to Basra and al-Ahsaa

After spending some time in Hijaz, acquiring knowledge at the feet of its great scholars, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab returned to al-Uyainah. At that time, he must have still been fairly young (in his early or mid twenties perhaps) and he was still not in a position of influence and stature wherein he could eradicate the evils that he saw around him. He could offer his views on some occasions but not much more than that was available to him. Instead he further concentrated on his studies, especially the writings of ibn Taimiyyah. (It seems that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was very attracted to reading—again, especially the writings of ibn Taimiyyah and ibn al-Qayyim. Al-Ajilaani even said that most of his knowledge was self-taught, coming directly from the Quran, the Sunnah and such writings.[1] However, it cannot be doubted that he studied under a number of scholars and was very close and greatly influenced by many of them, such as his father.)

According to one report, he stayed in al-Uyainah for one year before setting out again for the purpose of study, perhaps realizing that he needed more study and maturation before truly being able to reform his people.[2]

Damascus was the center for the Hanbali school. With his background in Hanbali fiqh and his desire to learn more of the writings of ibn Taimiyyah (who lived most of his life in Damascus), it is natural that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would desire to go to Damascus. However, his journey to Damascus would first take him to Basra, where he remained for some time.[3]

Basra was a prosperous, metropolitan trade center. In addition, it was home to many Shiites. It probably exposed ibn Abdul-Wahhaab

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that it was ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. See Aminah Muhammad Nusair, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab wa Minhajuhu fi Mubaahith al-Aqeedah* (Beirut: Daar al-Shurooq, 1983), p. 35; Abdul-Rahmaan al-Umar, *Haqeeqah Dawah al-Imaam Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab* (Riyadh: Daar al-Aasimah, 2001), p. 13; Abdullah al-Ruwaishid, *al-Imaam al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab fi Tareekh* (Cairo: Raabitah al-Adab al-Hadeeth, 1984), vol. 1, p. 34.

[1] See Nusair, p. 36.

[2] Cf., al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 33.

[3] Al-Uthaimeen (*al-Shaikh,* p. 33) says that perhaps he could not find a caravan heading to Damascus but found one heading to Basra. From Basra, a major trading town, it should not have been difficult to find a caravan heading to Damascus.

to many things that he had not witnessed in his native Najd (although he probably would have witnessed some aspects in Hijaaz).

In Basra, he studied fiqh, hadith and Arabic language. He studied with Shaikh Muhammad al-Majmoo'ee. It was in Basra that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab began to object to some of the innovations, heresies and polytheistic acts that he saw around him. In particular, he stressed that all worship must be directed to Allah alone. (In fact, according to one report, he wrote his *Kitaab al-Tauheed* during this stay in Basra.) It seems, that al-Majmoo'ee supported him in those efforts. However, those who supported him were greatly outnumbered by those who opposed him and often times the debates between them would become heated.[1]

Ibn Ghannaam narrates that on one occasion a man mentioned the supplications to the pious and saints and Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab objected to what he said, explaining the correct position. The man responded by saying, "If what this man says is true, the people have not been upon anything for quite some time." Many in Basra did not like what ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was preaching and tried to confound him in the mosque. Ibn Ghannaam narrates that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stated, "Some of the polytheists of Basra would come to me and throw doubts and questions at me. I would say to them while they were sitting in front of me, 'All worship is proper only to Allah.' This would confound them and then they would not say a thing."[2]

Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab tried to advise the people with gentleness and kindness but such was not fruitful. Al-Nadwi notes that it was in Basra that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab truly started to repel evil without any fear except the fear of Allah. Thus he was met with great opposition and even his teacher Muhammad al-Majmoo'ee experienced hardship due to his association and support for Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[3]

It is not clear how long ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stayed in Basra but ibn Ghannaam states that he stayed there longer than in any other place

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[1] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 34.
[2] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, pp. 76.
[3] Al-Nadwi, p. 42.

that he had traveled to.[1] Perhaps, this is what gave him the confidence to begin to speak out against the heresies and innovations that he was witnessing. Even though, his efforts and preaching were not enough for him to have a strong enough base to make any real change in Basra.

Al-Uthaimeen notes that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab greatly benefited from his stay in Basra in three ways: (1) He increased his level of knowledge, especially in fiqh, hadith and Arabic language; (2) He became exposed on a very close basis to the beliefs and practices of the Shiites; (3) The opposition and arguments he faced gave him some training in how to answer and repel the doubts and questioners.

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was met with much opposition, to the point that he was forced to leave Basra in the heat of the midday, walking barefoot.[2] While on the road between Basra and al-Zubair, ibn

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[1] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 77. There is also evidence showing that during his residence in Basra, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab may have paid a visit to Mosul to the North. Khattaab argues that his trip to Mosul is largely unreported because the work that records it (*Gharaaib al-Athar*) was published relatively late and was unknown to most of the biographers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. At that time, there were two important groups of Muslims in Mosul: Sufis who were inundated with grave-cult worship and Salafis who were opposing such practices. The struggle seems to have been great between the two groups. It is possible that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab saw this going on and this obviously could have furthered his impetus to change the ways of the Muslims—as well as make him realize what a true jihad or struggle it was going to be. See Mahmood Shait Khattaab, "Al-Imaam Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab fi Madeenah al-Mausil," in *Bahooth Nadwah Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab* (Riyadh: Jaamiah al-Imaam Muhammad ibn Saood al-Islaamiyyah, 1991), vol. 1, pp. 73-90. As a whole, though, it must be stated that Khattaab's evidence that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab visited Mosul is not completely convincing. And Allah alone knows best.

[2] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 30. Al-Uthaimeen (*Al-Shaikh,* p. 35) doubts the authenticity of the story concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab being driven out of Basra. He does so on two accounts. First, ibn Ghannaam, who lived earlier than ibn Bishr (and, according to al-Uthaimeen forms the basis for ibn Bishr's work), did not mention this incident. Second, Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Hasan, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's grandson, mentions that after going to al-Ahsaa, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab returned to Basra on his way to Madinah. Thus, his departure from Basra must have been a normal one. To this author, al-Uthaimeen's arguments do not seem convincing. First, ibn Ghannaam may not have mentioned the incident because he was unaware of it or he simply neglected to record it while ibn Bishr had this report through other reliable sources. Second, Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Hasan's accounts of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's travels are not corroborated by any other known source. (He might have relied upon someone

Abdul-Wahhaab was about to die of thirst. A resident of al-Zubair, known as Abu Humaidaan, found him. Feeling that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was a very respectable looking person, he gave him water and led him to al-Zubair. Muhammad stayed there a few days but wanted to depart to Syria. However, he had somehow lost the needed money for such a trip (perhaps it had been stolen from him). Hence, he decided to return to Najd via the eastern province of al-Ahsaa.[1]

At that time, al-Ahsaa was a center of learning for all of the four schools of fiqh. Many students from Najd flocked to that area. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab studied there with a number of scholars from different schools. He studied and stayed with Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul-Lateef al-Shafi'ee (discussing with him some of the issues of Ashari belief as found in ibn Hajar's commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari*).[2] He also studied with Muhammad ibn Afaaliq[3] and Abdullah ibn Fairooz al-Kafeef.[4]

After spending some time in al-Ahsaa, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab left to Huraimilaa in Najd, where his father had now moved to.

Before discussing Huraimilaa, it is important to note that the most trustworthy and relied upon works concerning Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab state that he only traveled to Hijaz, Basra, al-Zubair and al-Ahsaa (all shown in Figure 1).[5] There are a number of other

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whose memory of the details may have failed him.) On its own, his account of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's travels cannot be considered strong enough to reject something ibn Bishr recorded.

[1] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 30; Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 83.

[2] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 30. See Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 250. In this letter, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab praises Muhammad for choosing opinions related to faith that contradicted his traditional Ashari thoughts.

[3] Muhammad ibn Afaaliq had studied for some time in Madinah with Abdullah ibn Ibraaheem ibn Saif. Later, he would become one of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's opponents, challenging ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in a letter by asking him to explain a number of grammatical and stylistic points in *soorah al-Aadiyaat*. He also actively encouraged Uthmaan ibn Muammar to abandon his support of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Cf., Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 86; al-Bassaam, vol. 3, p. 818.

[4] Al-Kafeef was originally from Najd and was *salafi* in his beliefs, being attracted to the teachings of Ahmad ibn Hanbal and ibn Taimiyyah. He was very pleased with Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Cf., Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 86; al-Bassaam, vol. 2, p. 627.

[5] Journeying to different parts of the world to increase one's knowledge is considered a virtuous act. Hence, it is expected that those writers who were closest to Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and who were also his followers would be happy to list all of his travels. Since they all only mentioned these

less reliable works[1] that state that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab ventured to a number of other areas. For example, the European traveler Niebuhr stated that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab traveled to Baghdad and Persia. Al-Shashtari said that he also went to Isfahan.[2]

The unidentified author of *Lam' al-Shihaab fi Seerah Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab* ("The Brilliance of the Meteor in the Life of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab")[3] states that ibn Abdul-

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four areas, it is safe to conclude that these are the only areas that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab visited in his journeys.

[1] They are less reliable because they relied on second hand information or "rumors" about Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, as opposed to the works of, for example, ibn Bishr and ibn Ghannaam. Furthermore, some of those works contain much information that is definitely incorrect. For example, Niebuhr stated that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab did not consider the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) a prophet but simply a great sage.

[2] Cf., Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, pp. 36-37.

[3] This is a rather famous work written by, according to most scholars, an anonymous author. (According to al-Ajilaani, the manuscript bears the name Hasan al-Ribki, who may have been its author.) It covers the history of the "Wahhabis" from their beginnings until 1233 A.H. (1817 C.E.). Naseer (pp. 30-31) notes that it was the major work of reference for the majority of the Orientalists who wrote about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. She states that many of the Arabs who later wrote about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab relied upon what the Orientalists wrote and thus indirectly took from this work. She concludes that although the Orientalists may be excused for using such a work, since they may not have had access to better works in the Western museums and universities (in earlier times), no such excuse is available for the Arab writers who just followed in their paths. Abu Hakeemah (pp. 9-11) has rather kind words to say about this book. He stated that the author does a good job of analyzing events, had no prejudices against Wahhabism and seemed to have been an eyewitness to the expedition somewhere near Basra. In this author's view, though, the problem with this work is three-fold. First, the author is not known. Hence, one cannot tell how reliable or honest he was or what were his biases. Although not overtly unkind to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, he does consider his teachings to be heresy. Second, the work contains a great deal of information that is contradicted by other stronger sources (such as on the lineage of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, his travels and so forth). Hence, if the information in this work is not corroborated through some known and reliable source, it must be dealt with very skeptically. Third, it seems clear from the work that the author spent no time in Najd itself. Thus, his sources of information were those outside of the land of the followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. As is known, much false information and many rumors were being spread about Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in those lands and it seems that this unknown author used that type of information as, at least partially, the basis for his work. Hence, Vassiliev (p. 14) states that it is "a series of sketches, based on accounts by participants in the events in question, together with rumours and legends." Later (p. 66), he states, "The author of *The Brilliance of the Meteor* was hostile to the Wahhabis." Unfortunately, some

Wahhaab also traveled to Baghdad (wherein he married a rich woman who later died and left him a good fortune), Kurdistan, Hamadhan, Isfahan, Rayy, Qum, Aleppo, Damascus, Jerusalem and Egypt, returning via the Suez through Yanbu, Madinah and Makkah. It also states that he studied Aristotelian philosophy and Sufism in Isfahan and that he was also proficient in Turkish and possibly Farsi. He later went to Qom where he became a follower of the Hanbali school. Furthermore, it states that he did not begin his travels until he was thirty-seven years old. That work also claims that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab changed his name many times during those travels (being Abdullah in Basra, Ahmad in Baghdad and so forth).[1]

Al-Uthaimeen notes that this means that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab did not leave Najd before 1152 A.H. while it is confirmed that he had completed all of his journeys long before that time. Furthermore, the anonymous author implies that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab remained traveling for some twenty-five years. Thus ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would not have returned to Najd before 1177 A.H.—in fact, the author actually implies that he returned in 1186 A.H. while Sharif Suroor was ruling Makkah. It is an established fact that the new state in al-Diriyyah was founded by Muhammad ibn Saud and ibn Abdul-Wahhaab a good thirty years before that time. Furthermore, no one makes any mention of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab knowing Turkish or Farsi. Similarly, none of them mention him having studied philosophy or Sufism.[2]

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later writers, such as the Orientalist Margoliouth (in writing his article for the first edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*), rely heavily on this work by an unknown author. (Later editions of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* replaced Margoliouth's article with one written by the French Orientalist Laoust.) Even Vassiliev who noted such reservations about this work relied on it for some uncorroborated, outlandish statements concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. For example, based on this work, Vassiliev (p. 90) states that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, "was fond of women, had 20 wives and begot 18 children." Vassiliev simply notes that this may be an exaggeration. In reality, the chroniclers who were very keen on chronicling many details of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's life, including whom he was married to and what children he had, mention nothing resembling this at all. The same is true for other statements Vassiliev makes on the same page based on *Lam' al-Shihaab*.

[1] Cf., Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 37. A refutation in English of these claims may be found in Vassiliev, pp. 65-66.

[2] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, pp. 37-38.

A number of authorities mention that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab visited Baghdad. Al-Uthaimeen lists the European travelers and writers Niebuhr, Waring, Rouseau, Hogarth and Rehatsek who mention this. In addition, al-Haidari states that his father told him that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab visited Baghdad and studied with the eminent Sibghatullah al-Haidari. Again, it seems that this trip cannot be confirmed from any close source although there would have been good reason to mention ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's study with such a prominent scholar.[1]

Huraimila and the Beginning of the Call (*Dawah*)

During Muhammad's travels, his father, Abdul-Wahhaab, was relieved of his duties of judge in al-Uyainah due to a dispute with the new *Ameer*, Muhammad ibn Hamad ibn Muammar. Hence, he left al-Uyainah and took on the position of judge in Huraimila.[2] Thus, when his son returned from his journeys, he headed to his father's new home. This return took place between 1144 and 1149 A.H.[3]

Ibn Bishr mentions that upon his return, Muhammad studied under his father.[4] Al-Uthaimeen says that that may be correct but by that time, Muhammad's own level of knowledge had probably exceeded that of his father.[5] If so, he could have done this simply out of respect for his parent.

In any case, it was in Huraimila that Muhammad began his public *dawah* activities. He began to give lessons in the mosque. These included lectures on hadith, fiqh and Quranic commentary. A large number of people attended these lectures and greatly added to his prestige.[6] This was a practice that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would continue throughout his entire life, even when he was one of the leaders of a state. He also started to object to the heresies and polytheistic practices of the people around him. From the beginning,

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[1] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 38. Al-Uthaimeen (p. 39) makes the same point concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's supposed trip to Damascus. Al-Zirkily in *al-Alaam* is among those who mentioned the trip to Syria.

[2] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 87.

[3] See al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, pp. 39-40, for the different views on the year he came to al-Ahsaa and why this is the strongest view.

[4] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 31.

[5] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, pp. 40-41.

[6] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 77.

he had supporters (who, it seems, were relatively small in number at first) and opponents. This would be a pattern that would continue throughout his life—and still continues today.

It was during this time that some words were exchanged or a dispute arose between Muhammad and his father.[1] Unfortunately, none of the sources state the exact nature of this disagreement. Al-Uthaimeen notes that it probably was not concerning an issue of *aqeedah* (beliefs) as Abdul-Wahhaab, Muhammad's father, did not lend any support to the saint-cults and other false practices that existed.[2] One explanation given is that it concerned the payment that some judges received for solving disputes. Although it is not known that Abdul-Wahhaab ever accepted such payments, it is clear that he did not consider it wrong for the other judges to accept payments of this nature. However, his son Muhammad considered this a type of bribe that is forbidden in Islam.[3] Perhaps a stronger difference of opinion between them was concerned with the manner of making *dawah* and spreading the true teachings (and not the content of the teachings itself). In any case, what is certain is that while his father was still alive, Muhammad, out of deference to his father, was not overly active and public in his *dawah* (propagation) efforts as he was to become after his father's death in 1153 A.H.[4]

Muhammad spent much of this time concentrating on his studies in fiqh, hadith and tafseer. He wrote *Kitaab al-Tauheed* during

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[1] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 31.

[2] For an example of Abdul-Wahhaab's thinking, see *Majmooah al-Rasaail wa al-Masaail al-Najdiyyah li-bad Ulamaa Najd al-Alaam* (Riyadh: Daar al-Aasimah, 1409 A.H.), vol. 1, pp. 523-525. The tone and content is very much similar to what his son says.

[3] Cf., al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 41.

[4] Ahmad ibn Hajar Aali-Bootaami says that his father did eventually come around to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's way of thinking. See Ahmad ibn Hajar Aali-Bootaami, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab: Aqeedatuhu al-Salafiyyah wa Dawatuhu al-Islaahiyyah wa Thana al-Ulamaa alaih* (Kuwait: al-Daar al-Salafiyyah, 1983), p. 26. Furthermore, the French author Jean Raymond wrote that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's father was in complete agreement with his son but he only disclosed that fact to his closest associates that he could completely trust. Allah knows best the authenticity of that claim. Raymond is quoted in Muhammad Kaamil Dhaahir, *al-Dawah al-Wahhaabiyyah wa Atharuhaa fi al-Fikr al-Islaami al-Hadeeth* (Beirut: Daar al-Salaam, 1993), p. 47.

this time[1] (or he may have "rewritten and revised" it if the report that he actually wrote that book while in Basra is correct).

When Abdul-Wahhaab died, Muhammad was about thirty-eight years old. With the death of his father, he became the leading scholar in the area. He became more open in his teaching and calling of others to the straight path. He openly criticized the abundant innovations and heresies. He began to order what is good and eradicate what is evil. His reputation spread to the surrounding areas. Students began to flock to Huraimila to study with him. Even some of the surrounding *ameer*s began to be influenced by or attracted to him, including Uthmaan ibn Muammar, the *Ameer* of al-Uyainah.[2]

Ibn Bishr stated that Huraimila was under the control of two tribes which were originally one. The slaves[3] of one of the two tribes plotted to murder Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab at night but one of his neighbors was able to warn ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and he managed to flee.[4] They wanted to do this because ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was trying to bring an end to the debauchery and evils that they in particular were committing.[5]

Al-Uthaimeen states that although that story may be true, it was probably not the only reason why Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab decided to leave for al-Uyainah. As noted above, the *ameer* of al-Uyainah was already attracted to and impressed by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings. Furthermore, Uthmaan's support would provide a great deal of assistance to the *dawah* itself, as al-Uyainah was in a much stronger position than Huraimila.[6] Furthermore, it was also ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's birthplace and his family had a prestigious and respectable position there.[7] Additionally, due to the strength of two competing tribes, the situation in Huraimila was closer to that of anarchy and would not be a suitable place to set up the kind of mission

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[1] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 77.
[2] Cf., ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, pp. 78.
[3] For a discussion of the potential power of slaves in some Arabian cities, see Vassiliev, pp. 49-50.
[4] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 78.
[5] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 78; Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 31.
[6] Abu Hakeemah (p. 130) states that ibn Muammar "by the virtue of being the chief of 'Uyayna, was the strongest among the chiefs of Najd. Thus, no other chiefs could attack" ibn Abdul-Wahhaab while under his protection.
[7] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 42.

ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had envisioned.[1] Hence, once al-Uyainah became available to him (after its *Ameer* had accepted his teachings), it was the logical choice for him to move there to allow the call to grow in strength and numbers.[2]

The earliest chroniclers do not mention the exact year in which Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab moved to al-Uyainah. Apparently, it was not immediately after his father's death but after a year or two, in other words around the year 1155 A.H.[3]

Residence in al-Uyainah

Upon his arrival in al-Uyainah, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was very much welcomed and honored by its ruler. Upon meeting with him, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab explained the fundamental principles of his teachings. He explained to him that this belief was the key to success in both this life and the Hereafter. He further explained to them that the key to their relationship was the support of the statement, "There is none worthy of worship except Allah." Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab told the *Ameer*, "I hope that, if you truly work to support the belief in, 'There is none worthy of worship except Allah,' Allah will make you strong and give you the dominion over Najd and its Bedouins."[4] These principles were accepted by the *Ameer* Uthmaan and Muhammad was given a free reign to preach the pure Islam. The relationship between the two grew and, in fact, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab ended up marrying Uthmaan's aunt, al-Jauharah bint Abdullah bint Muammar, a very influential woman in the area.[5]

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[1] Cf., Al-Nadwi, p. 44.

[2] Al-Abood (vol. 2, p. 143) also stresses that the reason ibn Abdul-Wahhaab left Huraimilaa for al-Uyainah was not out of fear for his life nor a desire to return to his birthplace. It was mostly a strategic move: what was best for the mission and purpose that he had already set out to accomplish.

[3] Cf., al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 42.

[4] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 33.

[5] See ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 33. According to Hamad al-Jaasir, this was ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's first marriage since the chroniclers do not mention any marriage previous to this. This seems to be a mistake as ibn Ghannaam (vol. 1, p. 26) refers to him getting married just before leaving for pilgrimage while Abdul-Rahmaan Aali-Shaikh (in *Ulamaa al-Dawah*, cited in al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 28) mentions that his marriage was completed upon returning from the pilgrimage. For the discussion from al-Jaasir, see Hamad al-Jaasir, "al-Mar`ah

With the necessary personal prestige as well as the needed political support, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab set about transforming the teachings of Islam into a reality in al-Uyainah. His followers and supporters grew to large numbers in al-Uyainah and the surrounding areas. Given his new position and authority, one could perhaps say that in reality he had no excuse but to physically remove many of the polytheistic and heretical acts that he saw around him. And this is exactly what he commenced to do.

At the time, people of al-Uyainah used to revere and seek blessings from a number of trees and bushes in the area. Furthermore, there was a grave nearby in al-Jubail that was supposedly the grave of Zaid ibn al-Khattaab (the brother of Umar ibn al-Khattaab), who had died in that area while fighting the great liar Musailamah. People would go to that grave and seek blessings there, slaughter animals on its behalf, make oaths and so forth. With a very short period of time, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was able to remove all of these sources of polytheism from the land.

Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab set out with six hundred armed men and their leader *Ameer* Uthmaan to bring an end to the pilgrimage site at the grave of Zaid ibn al-Khattaab. He demanded that Uthmaan join them on this expedition as otherwise he feared that the people of al-Jubailah would fight them. Indeed, the oasis dwellers of that area were going to try to defend their place of worship. When they saw that they were greatly outnumbered and that Uthmaan's people were ready and willing to fight, they did not fight and ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself took an axe and began the demolishing of the tomb.[1]

Al-Uthaimeen states that there is no doubt that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's destruction of the tomb over the grave of Zaid ibn al-Khattaab without any "divine" harm coming to him must have

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fi Hayaat Imaam al-Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahaab," *Bahooth Nadwah Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab* (Riyadh: Muhammad ibn Saood Islamic University, 1991), vol. 1, p. 169. On the other hand, Ahmad ibn Abdul-Azeez al-Husain states that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab married Jauharah at the age of twelve. In other words, his first marriage at that early age was to Uthmaan's aunt. This also does not seem to be correct. Allah knows best. See Ahmad ibn Abdul-Azeez al-Husain, *Dawah al-Imaam Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab Saliriyyah laa Wahhaabiyyah* (Riyadh: Daar Alim al-Kutub, 1999), p. 53.

[1] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, pp. 31-32.

convinced some of the ignorant people of the area that those graves truly cannot benefit or harm an individual. Furthermore, those kinds of actions must have also greatly increased ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's fame and prestige in the area. In essence, al-Uthaimeen states, these actions can be considered the beginning of the practical stage of the call. Indeed, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had entered into a new stage.[1] This new stage is one in which, in general, many people are either going to be strong supporters or they are going to be strong opponents.

Going well beyond the simple removal of polytheistic practices, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab attempted to create a true Islamic society in al-Uyayna. The laws of the Shareeah (Islamic Law) were to be implemented in every aspect of life -superseding any customs or practices that contradict them. In particular, he insisted on the performance of the prayers -actually not just the performance of the prayers but their performance in congregation in the mosque.

During this time, a woman came forward to Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to admit her crime of adultery. She wanted to be purged of her sin -much like the woman who came forward to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to purge herself of the same sin. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab behaved exactly like the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself. He made sure that the woman was not insane, was not raped and that she was making the confession of her own free will. After meeting the necessary conditions, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had the woman stoned, with Uthmaan himself throwing the first stone. Then ibn Abdul-Wahhaab ordered that her body be washed, wrapped in a shroud and have the funeral prayer performed for it. All of this was both her wish and completely in accordance with Islamic Law.[2]

Al-Uthaimeen notes that this action on the part of the woman reflects how greatly the call of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had penetrated the hearts of the individuals of that society. Indeed, it became a new society as before ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's time, there was no great alarm

[1] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, pp. 43-44. Al-Uthaimeen (p. 44) also discusses the story of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab hearing a camel driver seeking aid from "the saint" Saad. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab told him to seek refuge in the Lord of Saad. This caused quite a stir and the people were then divided into two camps. This story was mentioned by Palgrave, Rehatsek and al-Batreek. Al-Uthaimeen concludes that there is no truth to this story.

[2] See ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, pp. 79-80; ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 32.

over evil practices such as adultery. However, this woman felt so much sorrow over her act that she came to have herself purified of the sin.[1]

Like what happens to virtually every purifying call or teaching, those who take part in evil deeds meet the steps of purification with great alarm and fear. There is nothing more alarming to an evil people than threatening their vices.[2] In fact, the following passage from Abu Hakima demonstrates how alarming and how dangerous this event was to the people around Uyayna:

> Shaikh Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhab and his followers at ‘Uyayna ordered an adulterous woman stoned to death. *Consequently the enemies of the movement*[3] *tried to suppress it before it spread to other parts of Najd.* But because Shaikh Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhab was under the protection of ‘Uthman b. Mu’ammar, the chief of ‘Uyayna, the chiefs of the weak neighbouring towns turned to the Shaikh of the Bani Khalid, who had the power to command Ibn Mu’ammar to do whatever those chiefs wanted. Shaikh Sulayman’s [of the Tribe of Khalid] power was so great that Ibn Mu’ammar yielded instantly to his orders.[4]

The Tribe of Khaalid were the rulers of al-Hasaa. During times of drought in Najd, the Bedouins would go east to al-Hasaa, needing to rely upon their hospitality. Hence there was a strong connection between the two. Furthermore, there was a matter of a great deal of money. Abu Hakeemah describes the source of this money that was threatened:

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[1] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 44.

[2] It should also be noted that those who objected to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab’s even tried to give Islamic arguments for why such a punishment should not have been meted out, claiming that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab could not carry out that punishment without the permission of the “greater ruler” or caliph. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab refuted their claim by showing that their claim contradicted the agreement and practice of the scholars since the time of Imam Ahmad when the authority of the central government was greatly diminished. Cf., al-Abood, vol. 2, p. 153.

[3] The teachings and followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab are referred to by many researchers as a “movement.” However, many have objected to this term in relaiton to Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his call to return to the true teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. Hence, throughout this work, save via quotes from others, the teachings, followers and effect of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab shall be referred to as his “call” or *dawah*, which is a much more accurate term.

[4] Abu Hakima, p. 130 (emphasis added).

> Many people from Najd owned farms in towns of the more fertile al-Hasa, which led to complications with the Governors of that territory. For example, Uthman b. Mu'ammar, the Shaikh of 'Uyayna in the province of al-Arid, owned a palm-tree grove in al-Hasa which yielded an annual profit of 60,000 golden rials. When he sheltered Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhaab, Sulayman b. Muhammad Al-Hameed, ruler of the Bani Khalid, threatened to prevent the Shaikh from taking his profit if he continued to protect ibn Abd al-Wahhab. This resulted in the expulsion of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab.[1]

Elsewhere, Abu Hakima also notes the greater danger of displeasing the rulers from the Tribe of Khaalid:

> The Shaikh of the Bani Khalid had long been recognised by the inhabitants of Najd as their most powerful neighbouring chief, a man they must appease with gifts and homage. This was the position in Najd in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. If the chiefs of the Arabian tribes withheld their presents from the Bani Khalid, the Shaikh of the Bani Khalid raided the towns of Najd and returned with the booty to his quarters in al-Hasa.[2]

Finally, al-Uyainah's trade was also partly carried out through the ports of al-Ahsaa.[3]

Due to the threat of this new moral tendency and the complaints that he had received, Sulaimaan, the Shaikh of the Tribe of Khaalid, ordered that Uthmaan either kill Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or expel him from his land.[4] Uthmaan acquiesced. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab tried to convince him to remain patient and that the help of Allah would come to them if they would remain true to the faith. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab told him, "This thing that I have established and am calling people to is the statement, 'There is none worthy of worship except Allah,' the pillars of Islam, ordering good and eradicating evil. If you adhere to it and support it, Allah will give you dominance over your enemies. Do not let Sulaimaan worry you or frighten you. I hope that you will see establishment in the land and power such that you will control his land and what is beyond it and

[1] Abu Hakima, p. 39.
[2] Abu Hakima, p. 128.
[3] Vassiliev, p. 81.
[4] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 80.

what is before it." Uthmaan was shy, and evil people around him convinced him to acquiesce to the demands of the leader of al-Ahsaa.[1]

Finally, for whatever reason (fear of losing some of his wealth, cowardliness, fear of harm coming to his people through an attack from the Tribe of Khaalid), Uthmaan told ibn Abdul-Wahhaab that he could no longer afford to protect him. However, it was not becoming Arab honor that he should be killed while under his protection. Thus, Uthmaan told ibn Abdul-Wahhaab that he would have to leave his city. This led to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's migration to al-Diriyyah in 1157 A.H.[2] and his pact with its *Ameer*, an event in history whose ramifications are still being experienced today.

Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's stay in al-Uyayna, although it ended in his expulsion, was definitely not a failure. His efforts were appreciated and when he left, Uthmaan sent with him a number of his horsemen to guard him on his journey to his new home.[3] Furthermore, as Ibn Ghannaam noted, no idols were left in the land of Uthmaan and the true religion had become well-accepted and clear to everyone there.[4]

(Incidentally, it should also be noted that it was during his time in al-Uyayna that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab began his practice of writing to other leaders and scholars concerning his mission and purpose. This was one of the most important ways by which he was able to convince others to follow his call—as well as one of the steps that led people to oppose him and what he wrote. In addition, while in al-Uyayna, he

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[1] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 33.

[2] This is the strongest opinion concerning the date of his moving to al-Diriyyah. For a review of other views, see al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 54.

[3] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 33-34. Ibn Bishr originally recorded some treachery on the part of Uthmaan. He stated that Uthmaan sent a guard to accompany ibn Abdul-Wahhaab but in reality Uthmaan told that guard to kill him. In his later "editions," ibn Bishr removed this story from his work, saying, "Know, may Allah have mercy on you, that in the first edition I mentioned things about Uthmaan and his horsemen… Then I verified that the story was absolutely unfounded and accordingly I dropped it from the present edition." (This is presented as a footnote to the text, vol. 1, p. 33.) Doubt is further cast upon this story by the fact that it was not mentioned by ibn Ghannaam. In fact, many contemporary scholars, such as Ahmad al-Jaasir and Muneer al-Ajilaani, categorically deny the authenticity of this story. Cf., al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 54; Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 91.

[4] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 78.

started his practice of sending teachers to different locales to teach them the basic message of Islam.)

Migration to al-Diriyyah

After being expelled from al-Uyaynah, a logical place for Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to move to was al-Diriyyah. Although it was a fairly small town, having only a thousand residents and some seventy houses[1], al-Diriyyah was a stable state under the leadership of Muhammad ibn Saud, who had held the position of *Ameer* for some twenty years by the time Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab came and whose reputation was quite good. Furthermore, it was not under the sphere of influence of the Tribe of Khaalid; in fact, relations between the two were not good, the two of them having fought as recently as 1133 A.H. Hence, its inhabitants would be a people who would be willing to defend someone from the threats and attack of the Tribe of Khaalid.[2]

Perhaps, though, the most important reason for moving to al-Diriyyah is that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's call had already been accepted by a number of prestigious people in al-Diriyyah, such as the Family of Suwailim. In fact, some of the members of the Saud family were also drawn to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's message, such as the *Ameer*'s two brothers Thunayaan and Mashaari, as well as the *Ameer*'s son Abdul-Azeez.[3]

Ibn Bishr and ibn Ghannaam give slightly different stories as to what occurred shortly after ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's arrival in al-Diriyyah. Ibn Bishr relates that Abdullah ibn Suwailam hosted Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and he feared what would be the result of having someone of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's notoriety in his house. A number of the leading people of the city were coming to the house to meet with Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. They finally approached the *Ameer*'s wife, Moodhi, who was impressed with ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings, to have her convince the *Ameer* to greet

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[1] Cf., Ahmad al-Qataan and Muhammad al-Zain, *Imaam al-Tauheed al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab al-Dawah wa al-Daulah* (Kuwait: Maktabah al-Sundus, 1988), p. 57.
[2] Cf., al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 53.
[3] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 53.

and accept ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. She told her husband, "This man coming to you is a bounty sent to you by Allah, so honor him, respect him and benefit by supporting him."[1] Muneer al-Ajilaani, the specialist on Saudi history, discounts this narration. He argues that it is inconceivable that a person of such fame could have entered the city without the *Ameer* knowing about it and that he would be visited by some of the leaders of the city secretly. In fact, al-Ajilaani concludes that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab moved to al-Diriyyah at the invitation of Muhammad ibn Saud.[2] Furthermore, al-Uthaimeen has come across a monograph written by the Najdi historian ibn Laboon that states explicitly that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab moved to al-Diriyyah at the invitation of its *Ameer* Muhammad ibn Saud.[3]

Al-Uthaimeen states that, regardless of whether ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was invited to al-Diriyyah or not, the story as given by ibn Bishr is definitely weak, given what is known about the environment at that time. However, he notes that both ibn Bishr and ibn Ghannaam finally agree that the *Ameer* Muhammad ibn Saud did go to the house of ibn Suwailim and welcomed ibn Abdul-Wahhaab there, promising him support and protection. Ibn Saud told him, "Have glad tidings of a land better than your land. Have glad tidings of honor and strength." Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab replied to him, "And I give you glad tidings of honor and being established in the land. As for the statement, 'There is none worthy of worship except Allah,' whoever adheres to it, abides by it and supports it will then have authority over the land and the people."[4] At that point, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab explained to the *Ameer* the principles of his teachings. He explained to him what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions were following, that every heresy is misguidance, that Allah honored the believers through jihad and that much of what the people of Najd were following at that time was nothing but *shirk*, heresies, oppression and wrongdoing. The two agreed to work together to spread those noble principles.[5]

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[1] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 34.
[2] Cf., al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 54; Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 2, p. 691.
[3] For the details of this report, see al-Husain, p. 187.
[4] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 35.
[5] Both Burckhardt and Palgrave stated that Muhammad ibn Saud was the first one who accepted the call of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. This is clearly a

Both ibn Ghannaam and ibn Bishr agree that ibn Saud laid down a stipulation in this agreement between them. He made ibn Abdul-Wahhaab promise that he would not leave the land of Diriyyah for some other land after they had fought together for the sake of Allah. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab agreed to this condition, using the same expression the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used in a similar agreement.[1] Thus, an alliance was made based on the principles of the religion of Allah and His Messenger, jihad for the sake of Allah, implementing the principles of Islam, ordering good and eradicating evil.[2]

But Ibn Saud also asked that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab not object to the tax that he was taking from the people at harvest time. For this, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab did not agree but simply told him that perhaps Allah would provide him with some wealth such that he would not need those things.[3] Thus, to this condition, according to al-Uthaimeen, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab gave a non-decisive reply. He simply stated that he hopes that Allah replace that with spoils for him that would suffice him. Al-Uthaimeen concludes by saying that if it is accepted that this second condition was true, then it shows that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab gave preference to the general interest of his message against a particular issue and he was fully confident that he would be able to solve that problem more easily in the future.[4]

Attar, on the other hand, has a different understanding concerning this second condition. He narrates the incident in the following manner,

> The Shaikh would not ponder both conditions stipulated by the amir: he permits what Allah permits, and forbids what Allah forbids. His position and his need for the ruler's pleasure did not deter him from declaring what he believed was right. He agreed to the first condition but rejected the second, rejoining in plain language: "As to the first, stretch your hand: we are one in affluence and distress (blood for blood, destruction for

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mistake but is typical of the kinds of mistakes that one can find throughout much of the Western writing about Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Cf., al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 55.

[1] Cf., ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 81; ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 35.

[2] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 35.

[3] Cf., ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 81; ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 35.

[4] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 55.

> destruction), and to the second may Allah grant you conquests the spoils of which would make up for the tax you exact." The attitudes of Shaikh al-Islam [ibn Abdul-Wahhaab] show clearly how he was most careful to stick to the Quran and the Sunna.[1]

The anonymous author of *Lam' al-Shihaab fi Seerah Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab* states that ibn Saud also made the stipulation that the rule would have to remain among his descendents while Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his descendants would be allowed to look after religious matters. Al-Uthaimeen states that it is apparent that no such stipulation took place, although that is what eventually did take place. Actually, it was only natural that such did take place given the environment and means at that time: the Family of Saud was already established as the leaders of Diriyyah and the family of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had the means and ability to be the religious leaders.[2]

Now with the true freedom to spread his message, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab concentrated on teaching and giving lectures in the mosque. Large numbers benefited from his explanations of some of the most basic concepts of Islam—concepts that the people there had become unfamiliar with (and unfortunately even today many Muslims remain unfamiliar with). In addition to the locals of al-Diriyyah, many supporters, students and others who heard of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's call were flocking to al-Diriyyah. Many of them came from the ruling families of their locales. Others who came were quite poor and were forced to work at night and so attended the lectures during the daytime, as ibn Bishr noted.[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab noticed the hardship that they were facing and he began to borrow money from wealthier people to help meet some of the expenses of the poorer

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[1] Ahmad Abdol Ghafour Attar, *Muhammad ibn Abdel Wahhab* (Mecca Printing and Information, 1979), p. 51. This is also the way that Vassiliev understood the action. Vassiliev (p. 82) writes, "Although Ibn Abd al-Wahhab did not object to the first condition, he rejected the second, promising Muhammad ibn Saud that his share in the returns from raids and jihad would far exceed the proceeds from taxation."

[2] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 55.

[3] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 37. Ibn Bishr noted that the situation was soon to change, just as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told ibn Abbaas, "Know that victory comes with patience, rescue comes with hardship and difficult circumstances come with ease." Recorded by Ahmad.

students.[1] To meet some of their needs, it is even narrated that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab established a kind of "brotherhood" between those who migrated to al-Diriyyah and the residents of al-Diriyyah, much like the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did with the emigrants to Madinah and the residents of Madinah.[2]

Around these devoted students of Islam, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab developed a new Islamic state and society. The law of Islam was the law of the land. People had a new-found respect for the Quran and Sunnah. The prayers were attended, zakat was given and so forth. In fact, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab recognized that establishing such a society was part of his responsibility as a person whose words and directives were listened to. After stating that he is a person whose instructions are heeded, he wrote in a letter, "I oblige those under my authority to establish the prayers, give the zakat and perform the other obligations toward Allah. And I forbid them *riba* (interest), alcohol and other forbidden acts."[3]

After some time, it became apparent to Uthmaan ibn Muammar that he had made a mistake in asking ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to leave al-Uyainah. He went with a number of nobles from his clan to meet with ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in al-Diriyyah and to request him to return to al-Uyaynah. Ibn Abdul-Wahhab's response was that the matter was in the hands of Muhammad ibn Saud who wisely declined Uthmaan's request.[4]

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[1] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 39.

[2] Cf., al-Husain, p. 194.

[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 150.

[4] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 82; ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 36. Ibn Ghannaam has some rather harsh words for Uthmaan, stating that after he was turned down, he left secretly hiding his grudge against the situation that was to manifest itself later. After that time, Uthmaan once again supported the call of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Indeed, he was even the military leader on a number of expeditions. (See ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, pp. 95-96.) However, it soon became clear that he was conspiring against ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and the new rule in al-Diriyyah. In one early battle, he disobeyed orders to attend the battle with his troops. He came apologizing later and his apology was accepted. However, after that Uthmaan wrote to Ibraaheem ibn Sulaimaan, the *Ameer* of Tharmudaa, and told him to join forces with ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's arch-enemy Dahhaam in Riyadh. (See ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, pp. 93-94). His apologies were always accepted and then followed with treachery. Ibn Bishr (vol. 1, p. 55) states that Uthmaan was also influenced by letters from ibn Afaaliq in al-Ahsaa, the land of the Tribe of Khalid, encouraging him to cut off all support to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Finally, after much intrigue on his part, in 1163 A.H. (1750 C.E.),

During his first two years in al-Diriyyah, besides lecturing and teaching, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stepped up his campaign of writing to other scholars and rulers to join the call and the new state. Some of his letters turned out to be quite fruitful. Huraimila and Manfoohah (just south of Riyadh) seemed ready to join with al-Diriyyah. However, other city-states refused. At that time, people started to call him a sorcerer, accuse him of innovations, accuse him of lying and so forth, just like they did with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).[1]

Al-Uthaimeen notes that the religious content of the call must have played a great role in who was rejecting or accepting his call. Undoubtedly, many must have been convinced by his teachings and were therefore ready to join him. Others did not accept his message and therefore refused to participate with him.[2] However, there must have been other important reasons leading some to reject or accept the call. One can never discount the allure of power and wealth in such discussions. Many who refused the call must have seen that joining with al-Diriyyah under the leadership of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and ibn Saud would probably imply a loss of one's own power, independence and prestige.

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after the Friday Prayer, Uthmaan was assassinated in al-Uyainah. As soon as ibn Abdul-Wahhaab heard that news, he immediately traveled to al-Uyainah to calm the situation and appoint a new governor. He arrived three days after Uthmaan's death. He consulted with the people concerning the new governor. Those who were well aware of Uthmaan's intrigues were completely against a new governor from the family of Muammar. However, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab convinced them that such would be best and appointed Mushaari ibn Muammar governor. See ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, pp. 97-98; Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, pp. 55-56. According to Abdullah ibn Khamees in his work *Mujam al-Yamaamah*, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself was not pleased at all with the assassination of Uthmaan and it was done without his foreknowledge. Furthermore, al-Jaasir attempts to show that many of Uthmaan's deeds were misinterpreted by the historians and that his position toward the call of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab may not have been as deceiving as depicted. See al-Jaasir, vol. 1, pp. 172-181.

[1] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 38.

[2] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 57.

A New Stage in the Call (*Dawah*): Jihad

The year 1159 A.H. marks a turning point in the call. After trying to convince the people of Najd via peaceful means to give up their polytheistic acts and heresies, the time had come for the use of force. Ibn Ghannaam described the environment behind this momentous change:

> [ibn Abdul-Wahhaab] continued to call to the path of his Lord with clear proofs and beautiful admonition. He did not first call anyone a disbeliever and he did not begin any aggression. Instead, on all those points he hesitated as an act of piety on his part and in the hopes that Allah would guide those who were astray. [This continued] until they all rose up against him with enmity. They cried out in all the lands, declaring [ibn Abdul-Wahhaab] and his followers disbelievers and they permitted the spilling of their blood. They did not affirm their false claims with proofs from the Book of Allah or the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They were not concerned with the crimes of falsehood and libel that they perpetrated against him. Nor were they concerned with what were the consequences of that in the form of punishment and banishment for his followers. Even though, he [ibn Abdul-Wahhaab], may Allah have mercy on him, did not order the spilling of blood or fighting against most of the people of misguidance and desires until they started by making the judgment against him and his followers that they are to be fought and that they are disbelievers. At that time, the Shaikh gave the command of jihad to his group and encouraged his followers to fulfill it. And they executed his command.[1]

By this time, Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's followers were greatly increasing in number (many of them not having the ability to migrate to al-Diriyyah) and fear was spreading throughout the land concerning this new collection of believers. In al-Diriyyah, the Shareeah and the teachings of *tauheed* had already made a strong impact and it was definitely time to spread this teaching to the surrounding areas—to those leaders who will accept it as well as to those leaders who will fight it. The followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab recognized it as their duty to spread the true message of Islam. Hence, the Muslims of al-Diriyyah were ready to fight, regardless of whether they originally came from al-Diriyyah or they were among those who had emigrated

[1] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 83.

to al-Diriyyah. This was a bond that superseded tribal, city-state and family loyalties, for it was a bond of faith.

The land of Najd was well-accustomed to raids and skirmishes between the tribes, Bedouins and city-dwellers.[1] Such was nothing new. Indeed, that was the manner by which a tribe's rule would be expanded or strengthened. However, in the past, those expeditions were meant basically for worldly purposes. They were not done in the name of Islam, with the hope that they would help spread the Islamic state and bring more followers into its fold. Thus, although the methods of the new state were much the same as what Najd was familiar with, the purpose and the goal behind the fighting was much different.[2] Speaking about this background, Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote to some who used to fight and now that the jihad had come were hesitant,

> O Allah, how strange!... You used to fight against Ibraaheem ibn Sulaimaan [the *Ameer* of Tharmadaa] due to one word he would say about your neighbor or due to a donkey worth about twenty dollars that he would take from you. For that, you would sacrifice your wealth and your men... Today, Allah has given you the religion of His prophets which is the price of Paradise and freedom from the Fire, and now you are acting cowardly?[3]

Furthermore, this new state was truly under the leadership of a religious scholar and reformer. Although Muhammad ibn Saud (and later Abdul-Azeez ibn Muhammad) were officially the political leaders, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab still had a great influence over the affairs of the state.[4] In general, all important matters were

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[1] For more details concerning the nature of these raids, see Vassiliev, pp. 45-47.

[2] Some sources describe the first clash between the followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and others as a small raiding party of about seven men who surprised a party but since none of them knew how to ride a camel, they were not able to capture their booty. Al-Uthaimeen (*Al-Shaikh*, pp. 58-59) shows that there does not seem to be any substance to these reports. Al-Uthaimeen also discusses how some of the later writers do their best to show the call to be very weak at the beginning in order to emphasize the greatness of their victories later.

[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 207.

[4] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, pp. 70-71, shows that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's influence was not as complete and total as some authors imply. Furthermore, as the new state became larger and larger, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab left more of its affairs to its political leaders as he concentrated on teaching the faith. However, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was always

taken to him for a final decision. This included, as ibn Ghannaam and ibn Bishr noted, matters related to zakat, finances, concluding peace treaties, sending of armies and so on.[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would also send emissaries to other leaders as well as meet and host other's delegations. Hence, the whole intent and drive behind this new state was under the leadership of this religious scholar and was thus completely different from what Najd had previously witnessed.

Ibn Ghannaam, the closest and earliest chronicler, states that the first clash between the supporters and the opponents of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab came when Dahhaam ibn Dawwaas[2],

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the religious leader of the state. He was the source for religious rulings and guidance, he sent teachers to other lands and even appointed judges.

[1] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, pp. 83-84; Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 39.

[2] In the 1140's or 1150's, as Vassiliev (p. 62) noted, "Dahham ibn Dawwas seized power in Riyadh—he was to be al-Diriya's most stubborn and merciless enemy for decades." Indeed, the fighting between the followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and Dahhaam would last for some twenty-eight years. (Faisal and Saud, two sons of Muhammad ibn Saud, would lose their lives in one of the earliest battles against Riyadh. See ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 92.) Dahhaam's father had been the ruler of Manfoohah. After his father's death, Dahhaam and his brothers were forced to leave Manfoohah as the people revolted against them. They came to Riyadh, a city in flux with no strong ruler. After some time, Dahhaam became its ruler. However, the people of Riyadh hated him and wanted to kill him. He called upon Muhammad ibn Saud, the *Ameer* of al-Diriyyah, to help him. Ibn Saud sent his brother Mishaari with some armed men and fought off the insurgents. Mishaari stayed with Dahhaam for a few months but could not put up with his cruelty. Dahhaam had a woman's mouth sewn up, he forced another man to cut off a piece of his thigh and eat it slowly and so forth. Ibn Ghannaam stated, "Examples of such deeds are plentiful." Cf., Vassiliev, pp. 62-63. The length of the battles between Dahhaam and ibn Abdul-Wahhaab can be seen by the fact that Dahhaam is mentioned off and on in ibn Ghannaam's work from vol. 1, p. 89 until vol. 1, p. 136. It seems that Dahhaam was a true hypocrite. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote to him advising him to follow the Quran and Sunnah. Due to the help he had earlier received from Muhammad ibn Saud, he first appeared very sincere and helpful. However, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings were spreading in Riyadh and this must have made Dahhaam fearful. He started a massive and cruel campaign against those followers. In fact, there were many times in which he broke his treaties and promises to the government of al-Diriyyah, causing the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab a great deal of harm and suffering. He fought against them on many occasions, making alliances with numerous opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, and then he would return to pledge his allegiance to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and the rulers of al-Diriyyah. On one occasion, ibn Ghannaam (vol. 1, p. 119) even wrote that his pledge was accepted though they knew that he would violate it but they did not want to stop anyone from accepting the path of truth. For incidents with Dahhaam, see, for example, ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p.

the leader of Riyadh, attacked Manfoohah (just south of Riyadh), which was in alliance with al-Diriyyah. It seems that the only reason he attacked Manfoohah was because it was in alliance with al-Diriyyah.[1] Due to the alliance, al-Diriyyah had no option but to come to the defense of its partner. Thus, as ibn Ghannaam noted, the first fighting that took place was actually in self-defense, assisting one of the call's partners. Indeed, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself stated in a letter to Abdul-Rahmaan al-Suwaidi, "As for fighting, until today we have never fought anyone except in the defense of life and honor."[2]

By this time, al-Diriyyah had become a strong and unique force in Najd. People from all over the area, from various tribes, had come to join the group of Muslims under the guidance of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Their morale was very high and they were ready to fight for their new noble purpose. There is no doubt that the presence of such a city-state in that region would arouse the fears of "the powers that be" at that time. Indeed, by the time of the incident of

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89, 90, 92, 104, 106, 119-124, 126, 133, 135, 136. See also ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 43ff.

[1] Since Riyadh lies between al-Diriyyah and Manfoohah (see Figure 2), Dahhaam may have taken that alliance as a threat to his own independence. Another reason he may attacked Manfoohah was in revenge for them removing his family from being its rulers.

[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 38. Note that the jihad that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers participated in has led to the claim that the call spread only through force and violence. This is the same type of allegation that the old school Orientalists made concerning the spread of Islam as a whole. In reality, Islam is a religion that speaks to the mind and heart of the individual, giving clear proofs to its truthfulness. Those who do not wish to see this truth spread will not have the means to combat it in an honest, logical and rational manner. Hence, they have to resort to other means. These means include fabricating lies concerning the religion and attacking it physically. This has been the pattern that has repeated itself throughout the history of Islam, including in the life of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Muslims have no option but to defend their faith with rational arguments as well as with the use of force. Otherwise, the worldly "powers that be" will not allow this truth to be spread as, in general, it is not in their interest. As Allah has said, "And did not Allah check one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of mischief: but Allah is full of bounty to all the worlds" (*al-Baqarah* 251). Jihad is, then, similar to the claims of others who claim that they have the right to spread truth, justice and democracy throughout the world, because they believe—so they claim—that such is the way that people will be truly free. If they have that right to make that claim and to spread their message in the ways that they do, Muslims also should have the same right to spread the true religion of God throughout the world.

Manfoohah, the opponents of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab were virtually already beating war drums. They were declaring Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers disbelievers whose blood was permissible to be shed. Hence, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers' lives were truly in danger.[1] An armed battle with al-Diriyyah may have been beyond the means of some, so they resorted to other measures to try to fight and destroy the strength of the new collection of believers. Indeed, the opponents of the call went outside of Najd for help and assistance in trying to stop the sweeping call.

In fact, in Huraimila itself, in the year 1165 A.H., there was a kind of revolution against Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. This was instigated by its judge, Sulaimaan ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, Muhammad's own brother. Sulaimaan even tried to convince the inhabitants of al-Diriyyah to revolt. He wrote a book attempting to refute ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, especially in matters related to declaring Muslims disbelievers and issues of fighting, and sent it to the inhabitants of al-Diriyyah.[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab quickly responded by writing a refutation of Sulaimaan's book.[3] Abdul-Azeez ibn Muhammad ibn Saud was able to lead a force of around eight hundred men to quell the unrest in Huraimila. Sulaimaan fled to al-Sudair.[4] Similar small uprisings occurred in Manfoohah and Durma, but they were both quieted. Within Najd, thus, it can be said that all the attempts—the use of force and the use of false arguments—failed to stop the growth and strength of this collection of Muslim.

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[1] Cf., Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 92.

[2] The work was later published under the title *al-Sawaaiq al-Ilahiyah fi al-Radd ala al-Wahaabiyyah*, although apparently it was originally entitled *Fasl al-Khitaab fi al-Radd ala Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab*. Similarly, Murbad ibn Ahmad al-Tameemi, from Huraimila, traveled in 1170 A.H. to Yemen to spread false reports about Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to the scholars there, such as Muhammad ibn Ismaaeel al-Sanaani. At first, al-Sanaani was fooled by such untruths but later when he discovered the reality, he sent ibn Abdul-Wahhaab a poem expressing his appreciation for his efforts.

[3] This work is entitled *Mufeed al-Mustafeed fi Kufr Taarik al-Tauheed*. Cf., al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, pp. 61-62. This work is found in *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, pp. 279-329.

[4] For more details concerning the battles over Huraimila, see ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, pp. 100-101, 103-104, 110-111.

External Enemies

For about thirteen years, the only opponents that al-Diriyyah had to face in combat came from within Najd. The troops of al-Diriyyah became stronger than those of all of the surrounding city-states. A number of factors contributed to this, as noted earlier, such as unity in purpose, a noble purpose, strong morale and so forth. However, there were two much larger foreign enemies that loomed on the horizon. Both the Tribe of Khaalid in al-Ahsaa and the Sharifs of Makkah had reason to be concerned with the new call and new state. They both had direct interests in Najd, although the Tribe of Khaalid's ties were much closer and stronger.[1]

From the beginning, the Tribe of Khaalid showed enmity toward the call (*dawah*). Indeed, it was them who forced Uthmaan to expel ibn Abdul-Wahhaab from al-Uyainah. However, internal strife within the leadership of the Tribe of Khaalid delayed them from making any decisive strike against al-Diriyyah in its earliest years.[2] When Sulaimaan (the leader of the Tribe of Khaalid who had Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab expelled from al-Uyainah) was expelled from al-Ahsaa in 1166 A.H. (1752 C.E.), Urai'ir (عريعـر) ibn Dujayn succeeded him and took the first steps against al-Diriyyah. His reign would last for over twenty years and during that entire time they would be at war with Najd.[3]

The people of al-Diriyyah heard the news that Urai'ir was preparing for war. The followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab started fortifying al-Diriyyah and their other cities. The first forces from the Tribe of Khaalid, with the support of some Najdi tribes, came in the year 1172 A.H. (1758 C.E.). This army was defeated by the followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab at the city of al-Jubailah, about 6.5 kilometers due East of al-Uyaynah. The strong army was forced to retreat. The morale and confidence of Muhammad

[1] Between 1126 A.H. (1714) and 1140 A.H. (1727), the Tribe of Khaalid carried out major attacks on portions of Najd on at least three occasions. See Abu-Hakima, p. 128.
[2] For details of their internal strife, see Abu-Hakima, pp. 129-131.
[3] Abu-Hakima, p. 131. Abu-Hakima (p. 42) had also written, "The Wahhabis were on the defensive for over twenty years (1745-1765), but changed to the offensive against the Bani Khalid till they finally defeated them in 1208/1793 and 1210/1795."

ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's people must have gotten a boost, as they held off one of the strongest forces in the area. In fact, this resulted in many tribes coming to make peace with the leadership in al-Diriyyah and paying tribute to this new central government. Al-Diriyyah gained control over al-Kharj, Tharmida, Ushaiqir, Sudair and other Bedouin tibes. In fact, their confidence was so great that they themselves raided al-Ahsaa in 1176. Although it was a "very minor affair,"[1] its purpose seemed to have been to demonstrate their strength and confidence. As a result, one of their greatest enemies, Dahhaam ibn Dawwaas came forward to make a peace settlement with al-Diriyyah.[2]

However, in 1178 A.H. (1764 C.E.), an unexpected opponent attacked the growing state. The Shiite Hasan ibn Hibatullah al-Makrami, the chief of Najraan, well to the south, perhaps at the request of the Ajman Bedouin who feared the approach of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's followers, attacked and routed the forces of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab near al-Diriyyah, killing five hundred and taking two hundred prisoners. This must have been quite a blow at a time when their confidence was greatly building. However, a peace treaty was concluded between the two parties, wherein ibn Abdul-Wahhaab displayed diplomatic skill, agreed to the payment of a contribution and the exchange of prisoners.[3]

According to the unknown author of *Lama al-Shihaab*, Urai'ir tried to enter into an agreement with al-Makrami of Najraan to rout al-Diriyyah. However, al-Makrami remained faithful to his peace agreement with al-Diriyyah, leaving Urai'ir's forces to battle alone. Once again, the forces from the Tribe of Khaalid were defeated.[4] Abu-Hakima writes, "Although 'Uray'ir failed to capture al-Dir'iyya, this battle proved to the Wahhabis that the Bani Khalid would seize any opportunities to destroy them. Thus they learned to distrust any truce promises that the Bani Khalid might offer. 'Uray'ir had violated an existing truce when he saw Dir'iyya being attacked by Dahham."[5] Furthermore, during this battle, Dahhaam, who had also earlier supposedly made peace with al-Diriyyah, joined forces with Urai'ir

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[1] As described by Abu-Hakima, p. 131.
[2] Cf., Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 90.
[3] Cf., Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, pp. 93f.
[4] Cf., Abu-Hakima, p. 132.
[5] Abu-Hakima, p. 76.

and he was forced to once again ask for peace from the rulers of al-Diriyyah.[1]

The *Ameer* Muhammad ibn Saud died in 1179 A.H. (1765 C.E.).[2] Muhammad ibn Saud had been a leader of his people for well over thirty years. Given the conditions at that time, this in itself was an indication of his intelligence and fairness. He was well known for his good character and strong faith. He is the one who truly supported ibn Abdul-Wahhaab when things were bleak and ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's life came under threat. His support and loyalty to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab seemed to be complete and sincere. Under his leadership, the call manifested itself and large numbers embraced it. Even the author of *Lam' al-Shihaab* has nothing but kind things to say about him, stating that trustworthy and informed sources spoke about his good character, faith and generosity.[3]

The people of al-Diriyyah, according to Mengin, then "elected" Abdul-Azeez ibn Muhammad ibn Saud to be the new *Ameer*.[4] The new state of al-Diriyyah continued to spread under Abdul-Azeez, subduing Washm and Sudair and even reaching al-Zilfi to the north. By 1183 A.H. (1769/70 C.E.), the majority of the population of al-Qaseem province to the north swore allegiance to Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and would, for the most part, remain ardent supporters for many years to come.

In 1187 A.H. (1773 C.E.), Dahhaam ibn Dawwaas finally faced the inevitable—that he was no match for the forces of al-Diriyyah. Hence, he escaped from Riyadh and Abdul-Azeez ibn Muhammad ibn Saud entered the city without any opposition.[5] This was obviously a great and important victory. Reading ibn Ghannaam's

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[1] Cf., ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, pp. 122f. This time, ibn Ghannaam states (vol. 1, p. 123) that Dahhaam kept to his pact for almost ten months before breaking it again.

[2] About that same year, the *Ameer* sent a delegation to Makkah with permission to perform the Hajj. However, that delegation was imprisoned and only some were able to escape. Before that time a similar event occurred. See al-Nadwi, p. 90.

[3] See Sulaiman al-Huqail, *Muhammad Bin Abdulwahhab: His Life and the Essence of His Call* (Riyadh: Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Dawah and Guidance, 2001), pp. 82-86.

[4] Vassiliev, p. 85. "Election," especially among the Bedouin tribes, was one of the ways in which a person would become chief or ameer.

[5] Cf., ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 112.

description of the victory and lines of poetry is ample evidence to show what a great capture this was.[1] The greatest enemy within Najd was vanquished. Among other things, this meant that troops could be sent off to distant lands without any fear of attack from within Najd. Furthermore, the money that came as booty was immense. Ibn Bishr states that it was enough to allow ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to pay off all of his debts that he had accrued to pay for his poorer students and supporters.[2] At this time, the situation of the state had become settled and the affairs were good. Thus, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab left the affairs of the state in the hands of Abdul-Azeez and "retired" to acts of worship and teaching, although Abdul-Azeez still sought his advice and approval for his decisions.[3]

The leaders of the Tribe of Khaalid were well aware of the significance of the victory over Riyadh. Hence, Urai'ir once again decided to move against al-Diriyyah. In this campaign, he was able to defeat Buraidah (well to the north of al-Diriyyah) in 1188 A.H. (1774 C.E.). But he died shortly thereafter at al-Khaabiyah.[4] Butain, the eldest son of Urai'ir, took command and tried to continue to al-Diriyyah but "his tribe was uncooperative."[5] Thus, they retreated back to al-Ahsaa.[6]

The continued show of strength by the followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab led many cities to realize that it was in their best interest to join with the new state. Hence, a number of delegations poured into al-Diriyyah to pledge their allegiance to Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and Abdul-Azeez ibn Muhammad ibn Saud. These included the people of Hurmah, al-Majmaah and al-Hareeq.[7]

At this time, the leaders of the new state turned their attention to the areas south of Riyadh. Zaid ibn Zaamil, the leader of the Tribe

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[1] Cf., ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 136.
[2] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 38.
[3] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 84.
[4] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 137-138; ibn Bishr, vol. 1, pp. 113-114.
[5] Abu-Hakima, p. 132.
[6] Dujain and Sadoon, Butayn's brothers, eventually strangled him. Then Sadoon poisoned Dujain to become the leader of the tribe. However, Sadoon was never completely supported by the tribe and this weakness played a great role in later campaigns against al-Ahsaa by the followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Cf., Abu-Hakima, pp. 132-133.
[7] Cf., ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 138; ibn Bishr, vol. 1, pp. 114-115.

of Dalim, tried to work together with the ruler of Najraan to attack al-Diriyyah in 1189. Their plan failed for a number of reasons. First, al-Diriyyah had become too strong for such an army and secondly there was no great trust between Zaid and the chief of Najraan. Furthermore, the Najrani leader also became ill during the campaign, thus weakening his resolve. This failure once again led to a number of delegations coming to pledge their allegiance. This time it included the leaders from al-Zilfi and Munaikh, including Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's own brother and previous adversary Sulaimaan.[1] (By 1190 A.H. (1786 C.E.), the lands to the south, being the lands of the Aflaaj and al-Dawaasir, were under the authority of al-Diriyyah, although "anti-Wahhabi insurrections continued for a long time in the latter province."[2])

By the beginning of thirteenth century Hijri, Najd had become a united and strong state. Indeed, with the internal struggles among the Tribe of Khaalid, it was probably the strongest force in the area. By this time, it turned its attention from simply defending itself to expanding its message to the outlying areas. This, once again, meant that it would have to encounter the rulers of al-Ahsaa.[3] By the time of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's death, virtually all of al-Ahsaa was under the control of the new state.

The other important threat in the Arabian Peninsula were the Sharifs of Makkah, the rulers of the Hijaz. Ahmad al-Qabbaani alleges that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab sent a letter to Makkah around the year 1155 A.H., calling the people there to embrace Islam. Ahmad Dahlaan claimed that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab sent thirty scholars as a delegation to Makkah during the time of Masood ibn Saeed (1146-1165 A.H.). When the scholars, who had heard of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, investigated the matter, they found

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[1] Cf., al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 65. Zaid ibn Zaamil "declared his allegiance to the Wahhabis, only to betray them shortly afterwards" (Vassiliev, p. 86). Indeed, he later joined with the Tribe of Khaalid in their attack on Buraidah in al-Qaseem in 1196 A.H. (1782 C.E.). The attack on Buraidah was unsuccessful and Zaid himself was killed in 1197 A.H.

[2] Vassiliev, p. 87.

[3] Indeed, by the year 1200, the Tribe of Khaalid leader Sadoon, who had effectively kept the followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab from penetrating al-Ahsaa, had to flee from al-Ahsaa due to internal strife, seeking refuge with his bitter enemy Abdul-Azeez ibn Saud in al-Diriyyah. Cf., Abu-Hakima, p. 134.

that the delegation of scholars were ignorant people and determined that they were disbelievers, leading to their imprisonment. Henceforth, the rulers of Makkah refused permission for the followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to perform the Hajj. Both of these reports seem questionable, at best.

Al-Uthaimeen notes that the date of Dahlaan's claim is when the call to reform was at its very onset. Furthermore, there would have been no reason to have sent so many scholars. Finally, it is inconceivable that an event of that proportion would not have been mentioned at all by ibn Ghannaam who recorded the greatest details about the history of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Al-Uthaimeen concludes that what the Turkish historian Sulaimaan Izzi recorded is probably closer to reality. He states that in the year 1163 A.H. the Shareef of Makkah informed the Ottoman Sultan of the appearance of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in Najd. He informed him that the scholars of Najd started to follow ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He consulted with the scholars of Makkah who concluded that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab should be convinced to change his views and, if he did not do so, he should be put to death. Based on that, the Shareef of Makkah sent a letter to Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. There was a delay in ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's response. Therefore, the ruler of Makkah captured sixty of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's followers who were in the act of performing the Hajj; he punished and then expelled them.[1]

It is clear, says al-Uthaimeen, from Izzi's description that the information that the Shareef of Makkah had about Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was mostly based on rumors. This is further supported by what Dahlaan himself stated. Ibn Ghannaam reported that by this time, the opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in Najd were already spreading false reports about him in the Hijaaz.[2] Thus, the first news of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab that reached the Hijaz was distorted news.[3]

Al-Uthaimeen continues by noting that Izzi's report gives the impression that those whom the Shareef captured were not scholars. They were simply pilgrims performing the Hajj. This is consistent

[1] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 66.
[2] Cf., ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, pp. 160-161.
[3] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 67.

with what ibn Bishr recorded for the year 1162 A.H. True, they may have been vocal about their beliefs and message but they may not have been of a level that they could refute the false claims against them. In any case, there is no question that the act of the Shareef Masood against the pilgrims had to be considered an act of aggression. Masood's successor and brother, Musaad, took the same stance. During the reign of Ahmad ibn Saeed, who took over in 1184 A.H., the relations between Makkah and al-Diriyyah had improved. One reason for that may have been that some of the supporters of the state captured a number of Hijazis, including Shareef Mansoor, and brought them to al-Diriyyah. However, Abdul-Azeez ibn Muhammad released them without any ransom. Thus, when that Shareef returned to Makkah, he allowed the followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to perform the pilgrimage.[1]

In 1185 A.H. the Shareef Ahmad requested the leaders in al-Diriyyah to send them a scholar to explain the true nature of their call. They sent Abdul-Azeez al-Husayyin who was also carrying a letter from Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. This scholar explained to the scholars of Makkah their message. He debated the scholars in the presence of Shareef Ahmad and also brought forth the Hanbali book of fiqh *al-Iqnaa* to demonstrate to them that their teachings were completely consistent with the Hanbali school. Al-Husayyin debated with them the issues of declaring a Muslim to be a non-Muslim, destroying the tombs over the graves and praying to the deceased. He was able to present the relevant evidence related to these issues and returned well-respected by the scholars of Makkah. In fact, there was no disapproval from the scholars of Makkah.[2]

However, the Shareef Ahmad was driven from power in 1186 A.H. and replaced by his brother Suroor, bringing an end to the short-term good relations between Makkah and al-Diriyyah. Suroor did not allow the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to perform the Hajj, save in the year 1197, after expensive presents were offered to Suroor.[3]

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[1] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 67.
[2] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 131-133. Ibn Ghannaam mentions the scholars from the various schools of fiqh who approved of al-Husayyin's presentation. Also see ibn Bishr, vol. 1, pp. 154-156.
[3] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, pp. 157.

In 1202 A.H., Suroor died and was followed by Ghaalib, beginning perhaps the most strained relationship between the Shareefs and al-Diriyyah. In the first two years of his rule, Ghaalib consolidated his internal power. After that, he requested that al-Diriyyah send a scholar to dialogue with the scholars of Makkah. Again Abdul-Azeez al-Husayyin was sent. This time, though, the scholars of Makkah refused to meet with him.[1] According to al-Uthaimeen, it seems that this was done at the request of Ghaalib himself. This might have been nothing but a ploy before his planned military offensive in the following year.[2]

The Ottoman rulers had long since given the go ahead to bring an end to this small but troublesome nascent state in Najd. According to al-Uthaimeen, the Shareefs of Makkah kept putting off any attack of al-Diriyyah for a number of reasons. First, they probably did not consider the state or message to be "too dangerous." Second, they also probably hoped that the internal opposition in Najd would bring an end to the nascent state. Third, they probably thought that the stopping of their pilgrims would be such a morale blow that it would greatly damage the call. Finally, they must have thought that the Tribe of Khaalid in al-Ahsaa, which had much stronger incentives to end the nascent state, would have taken care of the problem.[3]

By the time that the nascent state had gained control over virtually all of Najd, on the verge of controlling all of al-Ahsaa and having the possibility of influencing the tribes living between Makkah and Najd but under the authority of the Shareef, there was no question that the rulers of Makkah had to resort to something of a military nature. Hence, in 1205 A.H. the first troops of the Shareef were dispatched against the followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. However, the followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab defeated them.

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[1] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, pp. 173.
[2] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 68.
[3] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh Muhammad*, p. 69.

The Death of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab

Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab died in Shawwal 1206 A.H. (1791/1792 C.E.). He lived some ninety-two years. When he died, though, he did not leave behind any wealth. Nothing was distributed to his heirs. Even though it is well known that the jihad brought forth a good deal of war booty for his followers, all of the wealth that he had received was spent for the cause and in assisting others.

By the time of his death, he had seen his teachings spread throughout all of Najd and much of al-Ahsaa. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had also already seen the first signs of its potential against the leaders of the Hijaaz.

After the death of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, the call and teachings continued to spread and the strength of the new state continued to grow for some time. By 1793 C.E. all of al-Ahsa was under the control of Saud ibn Abdul-Azeez. By the late 1790s, military engagements began with the Pasha of Baghdad and the Saudi state were quite successful in many of those encounters. In 1803 C.E., they peacefully conquered Makkah. However, after suffering from diseases, they fell to the Ottoman forces in July of 1803 C.E.. Later that year, Abdul-Azeez was assassinated in al-Diriyyah. It is not clear who assassinated him, although many theories have been presented. Saud, his son and military leader, returned to al-Diriyyah and received the pledge of allegiance from its people. In 1805 and 1806 C.E., Saud's forces once again conquered the Hijaz. The new state also spread its influence into Oman, putting it into a direct collision course with British colonial interests in the area. Years of famine, drought and cholera epidemics in Arabia up to 1809 C.E. greatly weakened the new state and left it open for attack. Saud died in 1814 C.E. and was followed by his son Abdullah, although this choice met with some internal opposition in al-Diriyyah. By this time, the Albanian Muhammad Ali Pasha, the Ottoman ruler of Egypt, was well on his way to recapturing the lands taken by the state in al-Diriyyah. In 1811 C.E., Muhammad Ali started to move across the Hijaz, defeating the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. In April 1818 C.E., Muhammad Ali's son Ibraaheem had reached al-Diriyyah. Abdullah sued for peace and he finally surrendered in September, after six fierce months of

battle. Al-Diriyyah was ransacked.[1] Some of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's descendents were taken prisoner and sent to Egypt, some eventually going to Turkey for execution. This ended what is described as "the first Saudi state."[2]

The Personality of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab

Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was greatly devoted to the acts of worship. He would constantly be mentioning the name of Allah. He would often be heard reciting the verse of the Quran,

رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِيٓ أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ ٱلَّتِيٓ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَٰلِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَٰلِحًا تَرْضَىٰهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِى فِى ذُرِّيَّتِيٓ ۖ إِنِّى تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّى مِنَ ٱلْمُسْلِمِينَ

"My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me, and upon both my parents, and that I may do righteous deeds such as please You, and make my offspring good. Truly have I turned to You in repentance and truly do I bow (to You) in Islam" (*al-Ahqaaf* 15). Ibn Bishr noted that a gathering would know when he was approaching upon hearing his constant repetition of words of remembrance. He performed the late-night prayers. He also made it a point to attend the congregational prayers. Even when he was old and weak, he would be helped to the mosque to pray in the congregation.[3]

He was also a brave man devoted to his convictions concerning the religion of Allah. Without the help of Allah and then this noble quality, it would be inconceivable to think of him accomplishing the achievements he accomplished. Vassiliev describes him thusly,

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[1] The morale and the practice of many under the authority of the larger new state was not like it was during the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, Muhammad ibn Saud and Abdul-Azeez. Thus, ibn Bishr stated that the Egyptians were able to conquer them due to the sins that they were then committing. Cf., al-Abood, vol. 2, p. 252.

[2] For more details concerning the above events, see Vassiliev, pp. 89-160. The "second Saudi state" lasted from 1843-1865 C.E. The "third Saudi state," which is the current state of Saudi Arabia began around 1902 C.E.

[3] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 162 and 164. Cf.., ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 84.

> A prominent figure of his era and his society, he [Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab] was a man of great courage and passion. A remarkable boldness was needed to challenge the entire religious system of Arabia at that time and face the advocates of the old. His life was constantly under threat and he was sent into exile three times, but this did not crush his will. Through his passionate speeches and his eloquence, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab made a major contribution to the success of the religious movement he had started and to the expansion of the Saudi state. According to Ibn Bishr, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab 'raised the banner of *jihad*, though there had been nothing but riots and murders before him.' Mengin notes that 'he was extremely persuasive and won hearts by his speeches.'[1]

He was known to be very humble and beloved to the people. Ibn Bishr stated, "We have not heard of anyone softer or kinder than him to the students of knowledge, to the questioner, to the one in need…"[2] He was also very generous and simple, never fearing poverty and never attracted by the riches of this world. Although after some time the treasury of al-Diriyyah began to have great wealth and although he was the leading spiritual figure and teacher, he did not take any stipend from the public treasury.[3] He would distribute any wealth he would receive and was often in debt due to his taking care of students, guests and travelers.[4] When he died, he left behind no wealth—in fact, he had debts that were paid by others on his behalf.[5]

He was not overbearing when it came to his opinions. When he was unaware of something, he would readily admit that. He would make statements like, "I do not know anything concerning that issue."[6] In a letter he wrote to a group of scholars, he said about himself, "I do not claim to be free of mistakes."[7] He would not be adamant about his personal opinions nor blindly stick to any scholar or school. In the same letter referred to above to a group of scholars, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also stated, "If I give a ruling or perform any deed and you

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[1] Vassiliev, p. 89.
[2] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 162.
[3] Cf., Abdul-Mushin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 506, quoting from Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Abdul-Lateef ali-Shaikh.
[4] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 163.
[5] Cf., Abdul-Mushin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 507, quoting from Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Abdul-Lateef ali-Shaikh; ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 84.
[6] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 213. For more examples, see al-Abood, vol. 1, p. 319.
[7] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 241.

know that I am wrong, it is obligatory upon you to clarify the truth to your brother Muslim."[1] On another occasion he wrote, "I find in myself that I love for someone to advise me whenever I am mistaken."[2] Again, in another letter, he wrote, "If the truth is with them [that is, his opponents] or if we have some truth and some falsehood or we have gone to an extreme in some matter, then it is obligatory upon you to point it out and to advise us and to show us the statements of the people of knowledge. Perhaps, through you, Allah will guide us back to the truth."[3]

One of his outstanding characteristics is that he always attempted to be just and fair even with the greatest of his opponents. Once he quoted the verse,

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَـَٔانُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰٓ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا۟ۚ

"Let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice" (*al-Maaidah* 8), and stated that such was revealed with respect to the hatred that one must have towards the disbelievers (that is, although one will naturally have that hatred, it cannot allow one to swerve from being just). He says if such is the case with people like the disbelievers, one must be even more careful and make all attempts to be just with the Muslim who has an incorrect interpretation, a misunderstanding or even some desire.[4] Furthermore, he would often mention his opponents' good qualities while restricting his critique to the relevant issues. For example, with respect to the *ahl al-kalaam* or "scholastic theologians", he stated, "The *ahl al-kalaam* and their followers are from the most intelligent and discerning of people. In fact, they have an intelligence, memory and understanding that is simply mind-boggling."[5] He expected the same kind of treatment to be afforded to himself. He said that even if he were to make a mistake in one issue, one hundred or two hundred issues, others also make mistakes and all of his good points should not be overlooked simply due to some mistakes.[6]

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 240.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 289.
[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 301. See, in the same volume, pp. 42, 289 and 318.
[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 13, p. 52.
[5] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 164.
[6] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 240.

Ibn Baaz noted that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would always try to meet with his opponents. The reason being that he wanted to make sure that they were understanding each other properly, which may not have been the case simply upon reading each others' words.[1]

Indeed, he always held out hope that even his enemies would come around to the truth and sincerely follow the religion of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul-Lateef was ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teacher in al-Ahsaa but had written a refutation of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab entitled *Saif al-Jihaad li-Mudda'an al-Ijtihaad* ("The Sword of Jihad for the One who Claims Individual Juristic Reasoning"). Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote to him saying, "I love you and I would pray for you in my prayers. I hope from this short writing that Allah would guide you to His upright religion. How good it would be for you to be at the end of this time a *farooq*[2] for the sake of Allah."[3] He also wrote to Abdul-Wahhaab ibn Abdullah ibn Isa, whom both he and his father troubled ibn Abdul-Wahhaab much, "I would supplicate for you in my prostration. You and your father are most important of all people to me and most beloved to me…"[4]

In fact, immediately after mentioning the circumstances that led ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to declare jihad, ibn Ghannaam wrote,

> He would always beseech Allah, who gave him this great bounty, to open the breasts of his people to the truth, to protect him by His power and might from their evil and to turn their harm away from him. He would always be very kind and forgiving to them. Nothing was more beloved to him than one of [his enemies] coming to him with excuses such that he could quickly forgive him. He never treated anyone in a harmful manner after he had been given victory over him, even if had that person been given power over him he would cut their ties and made him suffer the most grievous of punishment and mutilation. He knew that such would have been done to him but he never sought revenge for himself after being established and given victory and when the delegations would

[1] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 135-136.
[2] *Farooq* is the nickname given to the Companion and Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattaab, meaning the one who discerns between truth and falsehood.
[3] Quoted from al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 36.
[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 280. For more examples of this nature, see al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 36-38.

> come to him, either grudgingly [out of defeat] or willingly. He would always be merciful to them. He would forget what they had done to him, as if they had never done anything. He would smile at them and give them a cheerful face. He would be generous and giving to them. This behavior is not found except among the noble pious people and the truly scholarly whom Allah has blessed with *taqwa*, knowledge and guidance.[1]

In sum, one can say that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was not simply a scholar. His in-depth knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah were important in presenting the logical arguments to convince people of the truth. However, more than that, he was a wise caller to the faith who put the faith in practice in his own life and in the lives of those closest to him. Hence, he was able to win the hearts of people, influencing and guiding many others to the straight path. This is what he dedicated his entire life to. This is what one can truly say his life was all about.

It must also be noted that his writings, his speeches, his actions and his call were all about the religion of Islam as practiced and preached by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself, passed on from him to the Companions and their followers. This is the true Islam—the Islam of the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab did not deviate—save possibly by human error that everyone is susceptible to—from that true Islam even in the slightest of matters of practice or belief.

The Results of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's Efforts

Allah says in the Quran,

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَـٰلِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُۥ حَيَوٰةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ

"Whoever works righteousness—whether male or female—while he (or she) is a true believer, verily to him will We give a good life, and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do" (*al-Nahl* 97). From all apparent indications, this was

[1] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 83.

the goal of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers. This good life is for both this life and the Hereafter. Abu-Hakima seems to have hit the mark when he described ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers, saying, "The Shaikh and his followers, the *Muwahhidin*[1], believed that if they stamped out *shirk*[2] and *bida'*[3], so that God was acknowledged throughout Islam as the one and only God and men trod the right way He had set for them, all Moslems would indeed become brothers, peace would prevail and the world would prosper."[4]

Indeed, life under the leadership of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was completely transformed in Najd. Jameelah noted,

> Under the rule of Amir Muhammad ibn Saud, the way of life, beliefs and character of his people were completely transformed. Previously most of these people, even in the holy cities, were Muslims in no more than name, knowing nothing except to recite the Kalima Shahadat and that too with mistakes. Now everyone was required to offer his prayers with the congregation, fast during Ramadan and pay their Zakat. Tobacco, silk and all other symbols of luxurious living were abolished. All un-Islamic taxes were annulled. For the first time in many centuries there was such peace and prosperity in the realm that the bedouin could sleep at night without any fear of their cattle and belongings being stolen. Even a black slave could bring his grievances before the ruler of the mightiest tribes and call him to account for his misdeeds. Sectarian conflicts ceased as the ulema of every recognized school of thought took turns in leading the congregational prayers.
>
> Shaikh Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab proved himself a Mujaddid of the first rank and a worthy successor of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taimiya.[5]

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[1] That is, the upholders of Islamic monotheism.

[2] That is, polytheism.

[3] That is, innovations and heresies.

[4] Abu-Hakima, p. 127.

[5] Maryam Jameelah, *Islam in Theory and Practice* (Lahore, Pakistan: Mohammad Yusuf Khan,1976), p. 118. Unfortunately, Jameelah herself was obviously influenced by *Lam' al-Shihaab* or someone who used that book as a reference, as some of the information (such as on p. 119 where she states that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab studied Tasawwuf in Iran) is erroneous. However, her general understanding of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's call is good. What is however most remarkable is, after praising ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in very glowing terms, she ends her book with a prayer to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), asking him to rescue the Muslim Nation from its current plight.

Finally, Ibn Bishr wrote, "[Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's] excellence and virtues are too much to count and more famous than need be mentioned. If I were to detail those matters, the pages would not be sufficient… It is enough for his virtues that as a result of him heresies were removed, the Muslims were united, the congregational prayers and Friday prayers were held, the religion was revived after it was lost and the roots of *shirk* were cut after they had been planted."[1]

[1] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 164.

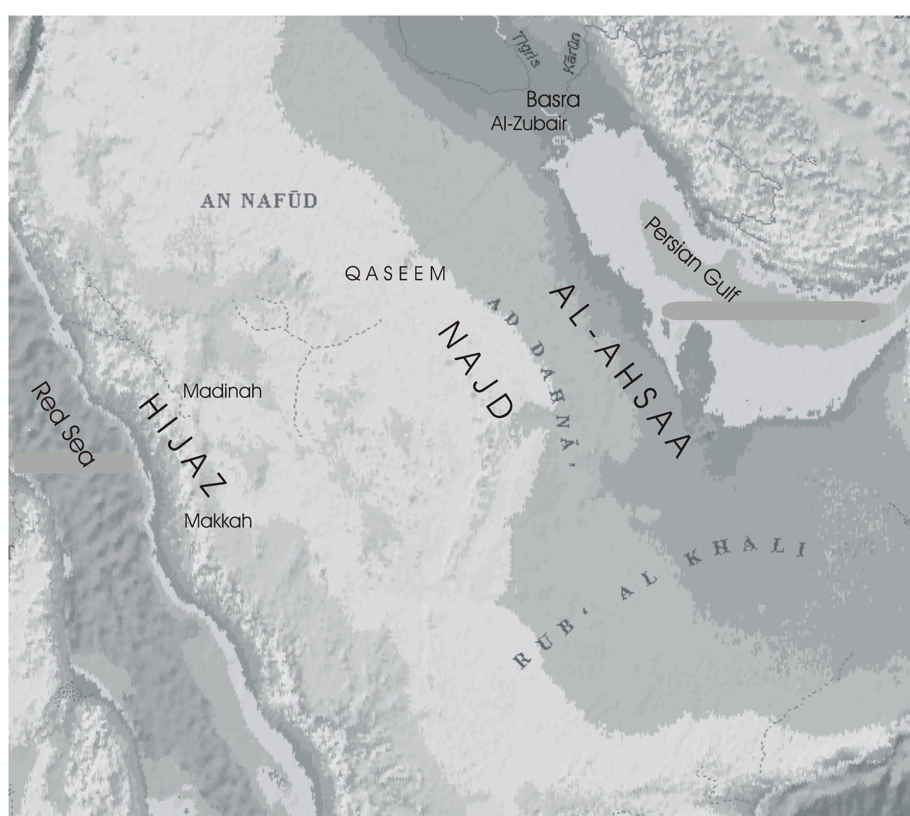


Figure 1. Map of the Peninsula showing where Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab traveled to: From al-Uyainah he went to Makkah, al-Madinah, Basra, al-Zubair and al-Ahsaa (also known as al-Hasa).



Figure 2. Map of the Relevant Cities of Najd in the Life of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Approximate physical distances (not travel routes): Riyadh (الريــاض) to Manfoohah (منفوحة) is about 4.5 kilometers. Riyadh to al-Diriyyah (الدرعيــة) is approximately 17.8 kilometers. Al-Diriyyah to al-Uyainah (العيينة) is about 27.5 kilometers. Al-Jubailah (ا بيلة) is about 6.5 kilometers due east of al-Uyainah. Huraimila (حر لاء) is about 34.1 kilometers northwest of al-Uyainah.

III
The Salient and Revivalist Teachings of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab

Islam since the Time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

The true "golden era" of Islam was during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions. At that time, both the state and the individual were virtually completely guided by the light of the revelation from Allah. Thus, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself said,

خير أُمتي قَرنِي ثُم الذين يلُونهم ثُم الذين يلُونهم

"The best of my Nation are my generation, then those who come after them and then those who come after them." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

At the same time, though, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had informed his Nation that division and deviation would definitely occur. Thus, he said, for example,

ألا إِن من قَبلَكُم من أَهلِ الْكتابِ افْترقُوا علَى ثنتينِ وسبعين ملَّةً وإِن هذه الْملَّةَ ستفْترِق علَى ثَلاث وسبعين ثنتان وسبعونَ في النارِ وواحدةٌ في الْجنة وهي الْجماعةُ

"Verily, the People of the Book who were before you divided into seventy-two sects. And this community shall divide into seventy-three sects. All of them will be in the Hell-fire save one and that is the *jamaah* [the group that adheres to the truth]."[1]

[1] Recorded with this wording by Abu Dawood. According to al-Albaani, this hadith is *hasan*. According to Abdul-Qaadir al-Arnaaoot, its chain is *sahih*. See Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Maarif, 2000), vol. 3, pp. 115-116; Abdul-Qaadir al-Arnaaoot, footnotes to al-Mubaarak ibn al-Atheer, *Jaami al-Usool fi al-Ahadeeth al-Rasool* (Maktaba al-Hilwaani, 1971), vol. 10, p. 32.

Deviations from the straight path of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), represented in small factions in the Muslim community, started at a fairly early time in the history of Islam. First there appeared the extremist group the Khawaarij. This group divided from the main body of Muslims over the question of who is or is not a Muslim. They concluded that anyone who commits a major sin is a disbeliever and an apostate, whose blood and wealth become permissible. Soon afterwards came the first appearance of the Shiite groups, who at first may not have been much more than pro-Ali partisans. After that time, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) predicted, there appeared numerous other sectarian groups, such as Qadariyyah (who believed in absolute free-will), the Jabriyyah (who believed in absolute compulsion), the various Sufi groups (with their own respective beliefs, much of it borrowed from non-Islamic cultures and religions), the Mutazilah (with their stress on human reasoning) and the Asharis (with their attempt to bridge the gap between human reasoning and revealed texts). All of these groups, in one way of another, simply represent a further distancing from the true and original teachings followed by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and passed on to his Companions. Although many times these types of groups started with “minor” deviations, over time they developed into full-blown independent theories of religion and life.

On the political realm, matters were also straying from the pattern originally established by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his rightly-guided caliphs. From the time of Muawiyyah, the Umayyad dynasty was established, which in itself symbolized a break from the previous form of Islamic government. The Umayyads ruled from about 40 to 132 A.H. (658 to 750 C.E.). Afterwards, what could be termed “the official caliphate” lied in the hands of the Abbasids, who ruled from 750 to 1258 C.E. Obviously, during that lengthy period of time, their rule over some parts of the Islamic world was nominal at most. Of course, the momentous occasion that occurred during that time that shocked the entire Muslim world was the fall of Baghdad, the seat of the caliphate, at the hands of the Mongol hoards in 656 A.H. (1258 C.E.). This shock led to a form of conservatism that swept through the Muslim lands, leading in

particular to the closing the door of *ijtihaad* (a topic that shall be discussed in some detail below).

The next important seat of the caliphate was the Ottoman Empire, which was still a dominant but greatly weakened force by the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. However, the "seats" of the caliphate did not prevent other smaller governments from appearing in various lands. Thus, along with Ottomans, during the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, one finds the Shiite Saffavid dynasty in Persia and the Moghul Empire in India.

Some say that the state of the Muslims began to steadily decline after the seventh century Hijri (after the fall of Baghdad). By the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, Islam had reached its lowest state in history on a number of fronts. Politically speaking, the Ottoman Empire had lost much of its authority and prestige. Many areas had become semi-independent. Ignorance spread throughout the lands. Furthermore, the Europeans were becoming formidable opponents and were extracting great favors through pressure on the Sultans.

Religious speaking, since the time of the Abbasids, when foreign "sciences" and philosophies were being translated into Arabic, the deviation from the pure Islamic teachings became greater and greater. The influence of Greek, Indian and Persian thought became greater, effecting the beliefs and practices of common Muslims. Hence, new schools of belief developed, heresies became widespread and non-Islamic mystical practices began to hold sway. At the same time, the true fiqh schools became dormant and ineffective, as many scholars claimed that the door to *ijtihaad* had become closed.

One can get a glimpse of the state of affairs in Vassiliev's words. Speaking about a time shortly after ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's death about the state of affairs of Ottoman lands: "Since 1803 the Wahhabis had put all kinds of obstacles in the way of pilgrims from the Ottoman empire, particularly those from Syria and Egypt… The pilgrims were accompanied by musicians, playing tambourines, drums and other instruments [such as flutes]. Many pilgrims brought alcohol with them and it was not unusual to find groups of prostitutes in the caravans. All this could not fail to provoke the Wahhabis' hostility because of its incompatibility with their religious and moral

standards."[1] Later, he also commented, "According to Bazili, 'the Wahhabis demanded—not without reason—that there should be no boys nor other beardless persons in the caravans.'"[2]

Further, Vassiliev writes about the reforms brought to Makkah as a result of its occupation by the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab,

> The strict morals introduced in Mecca ran counter to its people's customs and habits. The status of the holy city made its inhabitants feel superior to all other Muslims and led them to excuse a certain lewdness of behavior. Whole blocks of Mecca belonged to prostitutes, who even paid a tax on their occupation. Homosexuality was widespread. Alcohol was sold almost at the gate of the Kaaba and drunkenness was not uncommon.[3] The new rules might meet with the approval of the pious *ulama* and sincere believers, but they were burdensome for the greater part of the population. No less burdensome was the humiliation caused by the submission to the Najdis for the first time in centuries.
>
> All these facts, whether of an economic, a political or a psychological nature, created an anti-Wahhabi climate in Hijaz. [4]

Al-Jabarti, from al-Azhar, describes the Egyptian army that fought against the "Wahhabis" in the first decades of the 1800s:

> Some commanders, who were considered pious and devout, told me, 'How can we win when most of our soldiers belong to different confessions and some of them do not believe in anything and profess no religion? We are carrying boxes containing alcoholic drink, the *azan* (Muslim call to prayer) is never heard in our camp, the (Islamic) prescriptions are not fulfilled or even remembered, our people have no idea of religious rites. As for our enemies [the Wahhabis], as soon as a muezzin's call sounds, they perform their ablutions and line up behind their single imam humbly and obediently. When the time for prayer comes during a battle, they timidly perform the "fear prayer" (a shorter prayer) – one detachment goes forward and wages the battle while the others pray behind it. Our soldiers are astonished; they have never heard of it, not to mention seeing it.[5]

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[1] Vassiliev, p. 105.
[2] Vassiliev, p. 105.
[3] These observations are based on Burckhardt's travel experiences.
[4] Vassiliev, pp. 138-139.
[5] Al-Jabarti is quoted in many works, this English translation is from Vassiliev, p. 144.

The American Lothrop Stoddard wrote about Islam in the 18th Century C.E. (12th Century A.H.),

> As for religion, it was as decadent as everything else. The austere monotheism of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had become overloaded with a rank growth of superstition and puerile mysticism. The mosques stood unfrequented and ruinous, deserted by the ignorant multitude which, decked out in amulets, charms and rosaries, listened to the squalid faqirs or dervishes and went on pilgrimage to the tombs of the "holy men" worshipped as saints and intercessors. As for the moral precepts of the Quran, they were ignored or defied. Even the holy cities were the holes of iniquity. In fact, the life had apparently gone out of Islam. Could Muhammad return to earth, he would unquestionably have anathematized his followers as apostates and idolaters.[1]

By the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, strict and blind adherence to the different schools of fiqh had become entrenched in the Muslim world. The situation got so bad that in areas wherein more than one school was present, each school would pray separately from the others in the mosque, with their own Imam. This was even true at the Kaabah, the symbolic center of the unity of all Muslims. Additionally, the schools became "holy" and it was absolutely forbidden for anyone to go outside the limits of the school.[2]

Furthermore, the Sufis, who always claim to be the true adherents of the religion, practiced things that could only be supported if one completely ignores both the Quran and Sunnah. Again, Vassiliev states, "The Sufis sang and played musical instruments, and some of them drank alcohol, smoked tobacco and hashish and earned their living by fortune-telling on the basis of astrology and magic."[3]

A final point that was noted by the Indian scholar al-Nadwi is that the dominance of the Turks led to a situation where the most important and official language of the Muslim nation was no longer Arabic. That is, the language of the Quran had become of secondary

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[1] *The New World of Islam*, pp. 25-26. Quoted from Jameelah, p. 116. The scholar Amir Shakib Arsalan stated that a Muslim could not have presented such an accurate description of the Muslim world at that time.

[2] Cf., Usrah, p. 77.

[3] Vassiliev, pp. 69-70.

importance. This undoubtedly must have further distanced many Muslims from the true source of Islamic teachings.[1]

The Religious Situation in Najd

When it came to the religion of Islam, there was a great deal of ignorance spread throughout Najd. The Bedouins formed the majority of the population of Najd and their distance from the true Islam was most apparent. Thus ibn Ghannaam describes the situation before the influence of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, "Most of the Muslims had fallen into *shirk* and returned to the Days of Ignorance. They extinguished in their souls the light of guidance due to being overtaken by ignorance. The people of desires and misguidance ruled over them. They discarded the book of Allah behind their backs. They followed the misguidance they found their forefathers on. They thought that their forefathers knew best the truth and were knowledgeable of the correct path."[2]

Ibn Ghannaam stated that at first Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab did not declare the Bedouins disbelievers. Only after he determined that they were truly opposed to the basic tenets of the faith did he have no other option, according to the principles of the Shareeah, to declare that they were not Muslims.[3] In his letter to Ahmad ibn Ibraaheem he states,

> You know that the Bedouins belie the Book in its totality and they dissociate themselves from the religion completely. They also ridicule the city-dwellers who believe in the resurrection. They give preference to the rule of *taaghoot* ("false gods") over the law of Allah and they ridicule [the law of Allah]. Although they affirm that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and that the Book of Allah is with the city-dwellers, they have obstinately belied it, disbelieved in it and ridiculed it. With all of that, you still object to us declaring them disbelievers.[4]

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[1] Al-Nadwi, p. 30.
[2] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 10.
[3] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 83.
[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 209. In another letter (*Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 25), he stated, "If ablution has eight matters that negate it, they posses from what nullifies Islam more than one hundred nullifying characteristics."

A closer examination of the ways of the Bedouins before the influence of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab shows that their description as falling outside of the fold of Islam seems quite warranted. An early Western traveler, Volney, wrote,

> The bedouin who live on the Turkish frontiers pretend to be Muslims for political reasons but they are so negligent of religion and their piety is so weak that they are usually considered infidels who have neither a law nor a prophet. They readily admit that Muhammad's religion was not created for them. They add, "How can we perform ablutions without water? How can we give alms, being not rich?..."[1]

The mid-nineteenth century Finnish traveler Wallin stated about some tribes that did not accept the call of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab,

> [T]he Ma'aze (Maazeh) [a tribe in Western Arabia] are, in general, grossly ignorant in the religion they profess, and I scarcely remember ever meeting with a single individual of the tribe who observed any of the rites of Islam whatsoever, or possessed the least notion of its fundamental and leading dogmas; while the reverse might, to a certain degree, be said of those Bedouins who are, or formerly were, Wahhabiye.[2]

The accounts of Burckhardt and Palgrave are very similar.[3] Common among the Bedouin, as Vassiliev describes based on early Western accounts, were: a cult of the sun, the moon and the stars; rites and legends running counter to Islamic teaching; the cult of ancestors; making sacrifices at ancestors' graves; animism; fetishism and so forth.[4]

It seems clear from all accounts that polytheistic practices (such as the cult of grave-worship) were widespread. Intermediaries were prayed to in both times of hardship and ease. As ibn Bishr noted, virtually every tribe or oasis had trees, shrubs and graves that were sought after for their blessings and their help. In fact, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself often commented on said state of affairs—indeed, most of his original writings were dedicated to bringing an end to the kind of polytheism that existed. He stressed that those

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[1] Quoted in Vassiliev, p. 72.
[2] Quoted in Vassiliev, p. 73.
[3] See Vassiliev, p. 72.
[4] Vassiliev, pp. 72-73.

contemporary polytheists had even gone beyond the limits of the polytheists at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He wrote,

> The polytheists (*mushrikoon*) of our times are greater in their polytheism from the earlier ones. This is so because the earlier ones would ascribe partners to Allah during their times of ease and would revert to being pure [to Allah alone] during times of hardship while the polytheists of our time are always polytheistic, during both times of ease and hardship. The evidence for this is Allah's statement,
>
> فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا۟ فِى ٱلْفُلْكِ دَعَوُا۟ ٱللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ ٱلدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّىٰهُمْ إِلَى ٱلْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ
>
> "And when they embark on a ship, they invoke Allah, making their faith pure for Him only. But when He brings them safely to land, behold, they give a share of their worship to others" (*al-Ankaboot* 65).[1]

In short, the greatest forms of religious deviation can be summarized as the following:

(1) The cult of grave-worship and the veneration of graves. Save for the area of al-Qaseem[2], this practice was predominant throughout Najd. Common gravesites that people made pilgrimage to, prayed at and generally feared and venerated included the grave of Zaid ibn al-Khattaab (the brother of Umar ibn al-Khattaab) in al-Jubailah, the supposed grave of the Companion Dhiraar ibn al-Azwar[3], and other graves that were claimed to be the graves of Companions in al-Diriyyah. Ibn Ghannaam states that the ignorant people would have more fear and hope in those graves than with Allah. Their behavior near those graves would exhibit much more religious fervor than when in the mosques of Allah. They would cry and show such emotions that

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, p. 202.
[2] See Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 322.
[3] Ibn Ghannaam (vol. 1, p. 12) states without a doubt that the grave was not that of a Companion and that the devil had simply fooled the people into believing that.

they would not even show while in prayer or reading the Quran.[1] When spoken to about such clear errors, their response would simply be that such is how they found their forefathers practicing.[2] He later notes that they would make journeys to those graves and perform specific rites at the graves, with books even written as to what rites to perform.[3] He says that although they did not call such acts Hajj, they were in essence the same.[4] He also noted that mosques built over graves would be splendidly decorated while other mosques would be like deserted areas.[5] Indeed, they behave as Allah describes them,

وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ ٱللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ ٱشْمَأَزَّتْ قُلُوبُ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ ۖ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ

"And when Allah alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter are filled with disgust; but when those (whom they obey or worship) beside Him are mentioned, behold they rejoice" (*al-Zumar* 45).

Obviously, the above was not restricted just to the Najd but afflicted most of the Muslim world at that time, especially the Hijaz, wherein lies the Prophet's grave, first and foremost. For many, according to ibn Ghannaam, making a journey to visit the Prophet's grave was more important than Hajj.[6]

However, in Makkah they also had a mausoleum over Abu Talib's grave, Maimoona's grave and Khadeejah's grave (the latter two being wives of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Ibn Ghannaam states that much evil went on at these graves, such as mixing between men and women, illegal contact between them, raising voices in praying for help from them, giving money as ransom and so forth. He said that such acts were performed that cannot be considered permissible, not to speak of considering them

[1] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 60. He also notes that when they hear some "religious poetry," they would be filled with emotion but upon reading the Quran, nothing of that nature occurs to them.
[2] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 11 and p. 52.
[3] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 67.
[4] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 52.
[5] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 59.
[6] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 52. The Hajj is the pilgrimage to Makkah that every Muslim is required to perform once in his life if he has the means to do so.

acts taking one closer to Allah.[1] They even had a grave in Jiddah that was supposedly Eve's grave. The same types of practices occurred in Egypt at the grave of al-Badawi and elsewhere throughout the Muslim lands.[2]

(2) The cult of saints and saint worship. On the general history of cults of saints, Vassiliev writes,

> One of the innovations in Islam was the cult of saints. The Romans merely included local gods in their pantheon to increase the ideological impact on believers in the newly seized territories, but Christianity introduced the cult of 'regional' saints. The worship of local deities was replaced by the worship of Christian saints, which absorbed the earlier cults after an appropriate process of transformation. Islam [the author should have stated 'Muslims'] followed the same route. The cult of saints in the Muslim world is chiefly of local, pre-Islamic origin; but the earlier idols and Christian saints were replaced by Islamic preachers, the Prophet's Companions and prominent *ulama* [scholars]... The spread of the cult of saints was closely related to the activities of Sufis, or Islamic mystics. To attract wide numbers of believers, they ascribed to their saints the ability to perform miracles.[3]

This issue was perhaps the greatest source of enmity toward Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He speaks often of Shamsaan and the sons of Shamsaan, Idrees and the sons of Idrees and Taaj in Najd, Yoosuf and al-Ashari in Kuwait, and al-Idroos and Abu Hadeedah (common among Sufis).[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab referred to them as *tawaagheet* or false objects of worship. These deceased people were prayed to, sought forgiveness from and so forth. People would actually say things like, "O so and so, you know my sins, so please forgive me and have mercy on me."[5] People would sacrifice animals for them and believe that they could bring about harm or benefit. (Saint cults were very important and popular in the Ottoman Empire during the time of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Attempting to correct this evil practice was not a simple step.

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[1] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 14.
[2] See ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, pp. 13-19. Ibn Ghannam also discusses numerous other parts of the Muslim world.
[3] Vassiliev, p. 68.
[4] For more information concerning the identity of these figures, see Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 60-61.
[5] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 64.

Vassiliev notes, "The Sunni *ulama* [scholars] also supported the worship of saints; everybody who opposed this ran the risk of being assassinated."[1])

(3) Veneration of trees and other inanimate objects. In particular, the people venerated the *fuhhaal*, a particular male date palm tree. Women would come and embrace this tree and say (in a statement that rhymes in Arabic), "O stud of studs, I want a husband before year's end." Ibn Ghannaam states that then they would commit debaucheries therein.[2] *Al-Tarfiyyah* was another tree that they would seek blessings from. When a woman would give birth to a boy, she would hang a rag over it believing that that would protect the child.[3] There was also a cave outside al-Diriyyah to which they would send meat, bread and presents. It was believed that some evildoers tried to rape an *Ameer*'s daughter there and she prayed to Allah and this cave opened up for her and rescued her from them.[4]

In addition to aspects related to beliefs, social ills contrary to the teachings of Islam were also widespread. In particular, the practice of dealing in interest and usury was common. Vassiliev noted,

> Doughty writes about the peasants [of Najd], "They and their portions of dust of this world are devoured (hardly less than in Egypt and Syria) by rich money-lenders: that is by the long rising over their heads of an insoluble usury." The phenomenon was probably widespread on the eve of the emergence of the Wahhabi movement and might explain the Wahhabis' vigorous denunciation of the charging of interest on loans.[5]

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[1] Vassiliev, p. 69. Vassiliev (p. 79) also noted important "worldly" reasons why such opposition should be so fierce. He noted, "Opposing the cult of saints, destroying pious people's graves and felling holy trees amounted, under Arabian conditions, to the destruction of the ideological and spiritual basis of political fragmentation. Deprived of a saint of their own, the nobility of an oasis could no longer claim exclusiveness and lost the income from the pilgrimage to the saint's grave." Among other things, this quote demonstrates that if Muslims want true Islamic unity, there must be an eradication of all of the local saints that take people's energy and hearts away from the true and uniting monotheistic teachings of Islam.

[2] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 12.

[3] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 12.

[4] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 12. Ibn Ghannaam then states, "They forgot Allah's words, 'Do you worship that which you have (yourselves) carved while Allah has created you and what you do?' (*al-Saaffaat* 95-96)."

[5] Vassiliev, p. 38.

In fact, for many parts of Najd, especially where the Bedouins ruled, the law of the land was not the Shareeah but local custom (known as *urf* or *saalifah*).[1]

Even though these matters were widespread, it does not mean that the people had left Islam completely or that there were no scholars or studying of the religion whatsoever in Najd. Al-Uthaimeen notes that some writers[2] give that impression that all remnants of Islam had been obliterated in Najd. Indeed, even ibn Bishr, who stated that most of the people were living in ignorance, describes Najd as a land of knowledge, scholars and piety, engaged in religious debates and writing books.[3]

Actually, the Hanbali school of fiqh had been entrenched in Najd for centuries. Furthermore, it was the custom for Najdis to travel to Damascus, Baghdad and Cairo, centers of Hanbali fiqh, to increase their knowledge. These students had a good relationship with the scholars in those lands. When Mara'ee ibn Yoosuf compiled his work *Ghaayah al-Muntahaa fi Jama al-Iqnaa wa al-Muntahaa*, he sent one of its two copies to Najd with greetings to two of their scholars at the end of the work.[4] In fact, al-Uthaimeen notes a number of scholars who lived in Najd prior to the time of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[5]

Al-Uthaimeen does however note that the Islamic studies were concentrated on fiqh only, perhaps because the main purpose was to make the student qualified to be a judge. Hence, other topics like *aqeedah* or "beliefs" were not emphasized.[6] In fact, in a very strongly worded letter, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab denies that the scholars of that land had a true understanding of the basic meaning of "There is none worthy of worship except Allah."[7] (Al-Atram also notes that there were scholars but those scholars were busy with the details of

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[1] Apparently, the situation in nearby Kuwait was no better. Abu-Hakima (p. 58) writes, "The two Kuwaiti historians who tackled this problem, al-Qina'i and al-Rashid, write that the Shari'a law was not used in Kuwait during the entire eighteenth century and even later."

[2] He cites Abdul Rahmaan Ali-Shaikh (*Ulamaa al-Dawah*) and W. G. Palgrave (*Narrative of a Year's Journey Through Central and Eastern Arabia*).

[3] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, pp. 22 and 47. Also see Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 63.

[4] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh,* p. 17.

[5] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 17.

[6] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 18.

[7] See his letter in Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 186.

jurisprudence rather than matters of *aqeedah* or faith. This mistake on their part led to heresies being well-grounded and people's thought processes being misguided.[1])

In any case, al-Uthaimin is of the opinion that such complete ignorance as described above was restricted to only a portion of the population. He even says that it was a small portion. He says that many, especially among the Bedouins, did not adhere to any of the obligations of Islam as a result of their ignorance but there were many who adhered to the faith.[2] (Indeed, he had noted that the Bedouins had no scholars or Islamic judges among them. They would solve their disputes based purely on tribal customs.[3]) As a whole, he concludes that it was a "religious society" that had some ignorance with respect to some matters of belief.

Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, on the other hand, states that although such non-Islamic practices as those described above only existed among the ignorant of Najd, the claim that the ignorant were small in number cannot be substantiated, especially in the light of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's own letters. Such practices definitely were abundant among the Bedouins, who formed the majority of the population, and they were also present among the city-dwellers. He notes that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab described many of them as being completely ignorant of Islam, not performing any of its pillars, and some even disbelieving in the Hereafter.[4] Ibn Baaz concludes that it was the scholars, students of knowledge and judges who were among the small minority that did not engage in such ignorant practices. Finally, ibn Baaz reconciles al-Uthaimeen's view with the dominant view in the following manner: If what is meant by deviation from Islam is an ignorance of the true nature of *tauheed*, an ignorance of the obligation to direct every act of worship to Allah alone and failure to properly perform the five daily prayers and other

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[1] Saalih al-Atraam, "*Itimaad Fiqh Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab ala al-Kitaab wa al-Sunnah,*" in *Buhooth Nadwah Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab* (Riyadh: Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, 1991), vol. 1, p. 265.

[2] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, pp. 20-21. He does, though, conclude, that in any case the land was definitely in need of a reformer and one to revive the faith. He also noted that it was an area badly in need of a political reform, uniting the peoples and bringing them security and peace.

[3] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 19.

[4] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh* (p. 20) also made mention of these facts.

pillars of Islam, then such was definitely the case for the majority of the people at that time; if, however, what is meant by deviation from Islam is a complete disavowal of Islam and all of its outward manifestations, then to that extent it was most likely among the minority of the population. Most people still had an emotional attachment to and pride in Islam and some practices that demonstrated some attachment to Islam, even though they were ignorant of its teachings.[1]

This description of Najd brings up an important question: How is it that there were scholars and religious knowledge in Najd and yet such incorrect practices were so widespread? This is a question that is very relevant to the current situation among Muslims—and is another issue concerning which contemporary Muslims can learn from the life of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. In general, the small presence of scholars and knowledgeable people is not enough to stop the masses from following customs and practices that are dear to them, even if they be in contradiction to Islamic law. (In fact, this author knows of many Imams in the United States who have complained that they are not able to change the people's wrong practices.) On one hand, many of the masses are ignorant as to the rulings of these practices and, on the other hand, the social pressures to engage in such practices from fellow Muslims is often great. This points to the need for more respected scholars who can clarify the truth and convince others to follow what is correct. But something more is truly needed. Many mosques may have knowledgeable people yet they are not able to stop the wrong practices or wrong beliefs, no matter how many sermons or lectures they may give on such topics. One also needs the power and influence to "persuade" people to change. In other words, one needs the knowledgeable people who both have the knowledge to recognize the wrong that exists and the will to attempt to change it. Thus, al-Fauzaan notes that there were scholars in Najd but they either

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[1] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 63-67. Abdullah al-Ajilaan's views are very similar to those of Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz. See Abdullah al-Ajilaan, *Harakah al-Tajdeed wa al-Islaah fi Najd fi al-Asr al-Hadeeth* (Riyadh 1989), pp. 28-35.

accepted and approved of the evil situation existing at that time or they did not have the courage and strength to oppose it.[1]

Nusair adds another very important point. She notes that before the influence of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, the nature of the study of the scholars was such that it did not lead them to think about the changes that were required. Their knowledge was restricted to passing on what the earlier scholars stated, without question or debate about how it is to be or how it is practiced at that time.[2] Without capable scholars to lead, guide and advise the people, it is expected that the ignorant and the strong will then come to the forefront and drag people into practices that may not be consistent with the Quran and Sunnah.

To reform and change society requires an in-depth understanding of the way of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), a strong dedication to the faith, a willingness to sacrifice for the sake of Allah and the ability to withstand the onslaught of criticisms and attacks from those who do not wish to change their ways regardless of what the Quran and Sunnah may say. It takes someone with the understanding of the faith and of the caliber of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to change the entire foundation and edifice of society. This reality should lead to a greater appreciation for what people like Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab accomplished as well as a greater appreciation for the task ahead of the Muslims of today.

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and *Aqeedah* (Beliefs and Faith)

Aqeedah—which is actually a term for the Quranic word *al-imaan* or faith—is the foundation of a person's life and actions. Straying in matters of belief and faith has ramifications for one's entire outlook, goal, purpose and behavior.[3]

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[1] Saalih al-Fauzaan, *Min Mashaaheer al-Mujaddideen fi al-Islaam* (Riyadh: Al-Riaasah al-Aamah li-Idaaraat al-Bahooth al-Ilmiyyah wa al-Iftaa wa al-Dawah wa al-Arshaad, 1408), pp. 72-73.

[2] Nusair, p. 59.

[3] The following discussion must be kept brief. For details concerning all the aspects of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's *aqeedah* or beliefs, see al-Abood, vol. 1, pp. 247-687 and vol. 2, pp. 1-114.

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's Methodology

Before discussing the main aspects of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's *aqeedah*, it is important to first note his methodology concerning matters of *aqeedah*. Indeed, of foremost importance in attaining the proper beliefs is the methodology that one follows when it comes to matters of faith. The basic principles concerning this matter can easily be derived from the Quran and Sunnah. However, over the years, many are the Muslims who have sought to ignore this pristine methodology and follow instead the ways of the philosophers, mystics, Jews, Christians and so forth. This is part of what Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was up against. Much of his revivalist teachings were concerned with this question of making people understand on what basis one's beliefs must be founded.

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's methodology in matters of *aqeedah* can be summarized in the following points:[1]

(1) The source and foundation of all beliefs must be the revelation that has come from Allah as found in the Quran and the Sunnah: The Quran and Sunnah are sufficient in guiding mankind to all of the essentials of the faith. Hence, the Quran and Sunnah must take precedence over any other "source" of knowledge. They must take precedence over human reasoning when such reasoning comes to a conclusion that definitively contradicts the Quran or Sunnah.[2] This principle is clearly demonstrated in the writings and teachings of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. For example, he wrote, "Your heart must be certain that the Book of Allah is the best of books and the greatest of them in clarifying [the truth], curing the ills of ignorance

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[1] Cf., Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 271-286.

[2] This does not mean that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab considered human reasoning as having no positive role to play. However, when it comes to matters of the "unseen" which are beyond the knowledge and understanding of humans, one must restrict oneself to what has come from Allah via revelation. Furthermore, as ibn Taimiyyah demonstrated before him, there is nothing in his system of beliefs that is contradicted by human reasoning. Thus, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab said, "We have not come with anything that contradicts [the revealed texts] that have been passed down nor that is rejected by sound reasoning." Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 98. For more details, see al-Abood, vol. 1, pp. 334f.

and the greatest of them in distinguishing between truth and falsehood."[1]

For virtually every issue, reliance must be placed on the texts of the Quran and Sunnah and if these two sources state any matter in a definitive way, there is no need nor is it proper to move on to any other source to contradict them. Furthermore, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab made it clear that ignoring the texts of the Quran and Sunnah by following the views and opinions of individuals—even if they be scholars—puts one's faith in a precarious position. He quoted the example of Imam Ahmad who had a great deal of respect for Sufyaan al-Thauri. Yet Imam Ahmad was shocked to consider people knowing the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and then following Sufyaan's opinion instead of the hadith. Ahmad quoted the verse,

فَلْيَحْذَرِ ٱلَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِۦٓ أَن تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

"And let those who oppose the Messenger's commandment beware lest some trial (*fitnah*) should befall them or a painful torment should be inflicted on them" (*al-Noor* 63). Ahmad said, "Do you know what the *fitnah* (trial) is? The *fitnah* is *shirk* [associating partners with Allah]."[2]

(2) Affirmation of the place of the Sunnah in matters of *aqeedah*: In the history of Islam, there developed this concept that matters of faith, as opposed to matters of law, have to be based on "definitive" evidence and some categories of hadith do not meet this requirement.[3] This led to a rejection of certain authentic hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).[4] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab opposed this approach, relying on the example set by the earliest scholars, and affirmed that all authenticated hadith of the

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[1] Quoted in Nusair, p. 105.

[2] See Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 267.

[3] For many, this simply meant the philosophical conclusions that they derived which, in reality, were almost always far from "definitive".

[4] Those that were known as *ahaad* (meaning they did not reach the level of being *mutawaatir* or a definitive continuous transmission). Even though the scholars of hadith considered them authentic hadith, if large enough numbers of people did not transmit them, certain later schools would then claim that they were not "definitive" and therefore not suitable for matters of *aqeedah*. This approach clearly runs contrary to the practice of the Companions and the Followers but space does not allow a detailed discussion of this issue.

Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) must be believed in regardless of the topic.

(3) Using the statements of the Companions and the consensus and explanations of the early scholars as supportive evidence: The Companions learned and grew up in Islam directly under the guidance of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). There is no question that their understanding and devotion to the faith is greater than any generation that came later. In fact, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself said,

خير أُمتي قَرنِي ثُم الذين يلُونهم ثُم الذين يلُونهم

"The best of my Nation are my generation, then those who come after them and then those who come after them." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) Indeed, the first three generations, based on the statement of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), play a special role in Islam. Their understanding and their application of Islam must be considered the proper and correct understanding and application of this religion that is meant for all of mankind until the Day of Judgment. Hence, in numerous of his writings and letters, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab insisted upon following the ways of the early pious Muslims.

(4) Adhering to all of the relevant texts concerning an issue, seeking to resolve any apparent contradiction between them without discarding any of them: This is a very important issue related to *aqeedah* (beliefs). Ignorance of this principle is what led many earlier groups astray. In fact, when commenting on the verse,

وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَٰكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا

"And We made you, a just (and the best) nation" (*al-Baqarah* 143), ibn Abdul-Wahhaab noted the ramifications of following all of the texts in matters of *aqeedah*. He stated, "The saved group is in an intermediate position: being between the compulsionists and the free-willers when it comes to the actions of Allah; being between the Murjiah and the Waeediyyah when it comes to the threats of Allah; being between the Harooriyyah and Mutazilah and the Murjiah and Jahamiyyah when it comes to faith and religion; and being between the Rafidhah and Khawaraj when it comes to the Companions of the

Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).”[1] If one wanted to briefly summarize the mistakes that led to the creation of these different heretical groups, it was a failure to combine together all the relevant texts on an issue and understand them as a consistent, relevant whole.

(5) There is no complete allegiance and submission to the teachings of any human save the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): As a corollary to the first point, it follows that every human commits mistakes and no one is to be completely followed in everything that he says save the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab once wrote,

> I—and all praises be to Allah alone—am not calling to a Sufi, fiqh or theological school. Nor am I calling to any of the Imams that I greatly respect, such as ibn al-Qayyim, al-Dhahabi, ibn Katheer and others. Instead, I am calling to Allah alone, who has no partners, and I am calling to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) which he advised the first and the last of his nation to follow. And I hope that I never reject any truth that should come to me. In fact, I call to witness Allah, His angels and all of His creation that if any word of truth should come to me from him[2] I should then accept it with a complete submission[3] and I should completely discard any statement from my Imams that contradicts it—save for [my Imam] the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who only spoke the truth.[4]

On many other occasions, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also quoted the verse,

ٱتَّخَذُوٓا۟ أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَٰنَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلْمَسِيحَ ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَآ أُمِرُوٓا۟ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوٓا۟ إِلَٰهًا وَٰحِدًا ۖ لَّآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ سُبْحَٰنَهُۥ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 8.

[2] Referring to Abdullah ibn Isa, the *mutawwa* of al-Diriyyah. Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was greatly harmed by both Abdullah and Abdullah’s son Abdul-Wahhaab.

[3] Literally, “upon the head and eye,” an Arabic expression of complete acceptance and submission.

[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 252.

"They [the Jews and Christians] took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allah, and (they also took as their Lord) Messiah, the son of Mary while they were commanded to worship but one God: there is no god but He. Praise and glory be to Him: (far above is He) from having the partners they associate (with Him)" (*al-Taubah* 31). In addition, he would quote the hadith of the ex-Christian Adi ibn Haatim who told the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), "We did not use to worship them." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then explained that their worship of them is that whenever they permitted something forbidden, they would follow them and when they forbade something permitted, they would follow their directives.[1] In other words, they set them up as ultimate authorities, a position that should only lie with the creator.

(6) Avoidance of any and all heresies in the religion. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stated,

وإياكُم ومحدثَات الأمورِ فَإن كُلّ بِدعة ضلالَةٌ

"And avoid newly-introduced matters. Verily, every heresy is a going astray."[2] As ibn Taimiyyah once noted, "The religion is built upon two foundations: that none is to be worshipped except Allah and that He is not to be worshipped except in a way sanctioned [in the Shareeah]."[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself stated, "You [supporters of heresies] call [such heresies] 'good heresies,' while the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'Every heresy is misguidance and every misguidance is in the Fire.' He did not point out any exception to that for us."[4] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab lived at a time in which heresies and innovations were popular and widespread among the people—to the point that the sunnah became unknown and

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[1] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi. Although its chain definitely has some weakness to it, al-Albaani has concluded that the hadith is *hasan*. See Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan al-Tirmidhi* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Tarbiyyah al-Arabi li-Duwal al-Khaleej, 1988), vol. 3, p. 56.

[2] Recorded by Abu Dawood and al-Tirmidhi. This hadith is *sahih*. A detailed discussion of its authenticity may be found in Jamaal Zarabozo, *Commentary on the Forty Hadith of al-Nawawi* (Boulder, CO: Al-Basheer Company, 1999), vol. 2, pp. 1043-1045.

[3] Quoted in Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 129.

[4] Quoted in Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 129.

difficult for the people to follow in the face of what they had accepted as the proper way of faith. Hence, in attempting to remove the innovations and heresies, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab fought an uphill battle that took a great deal of effort and striving.[1] But he clearly wrote that one of his principles is, "The obligation of following the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and avoiding innovations, even if they have become widespread among the majority of the masses."[2]

On this point, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab is referring to the matters of a religious nature or, in other words, actions or beliefs that one claims brings a person closer to Allah, such as how one is to worship Allah, pray, fast and so forth. However, actions that are not of a "religious" nature and fall within what is permitted by the law are not considered heresies.[3]

(7) Avoidance of the discussions of the philosophers and dialecticians in matters of faith (*aqeedah)*—again, relying solely on the clear teachings of the Quran and Sunnah.[4] When it comes to the matter of knowing true faith, the sciences of philosophy, divinity and so forth are not beneficial, according to Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He presents quotes from many of the early scholars who found those types of sciences blameworthy. In fact, he states that there was a consensus on this point. He notes that much of the time some scholars discuss concepts that are not even found in the Quran or Sunnah ("body," "accident," "direction" and so forth) and thus lead to a kind of *tauheed* (monotheism) that is very different from the clear and concise *tauheed* of Islam.[5] He also noted a phenomenon that is common in similar works today, "When one reads through a book from the books of dialectic theology… one finds that in the book, from the beginning to the end, there is no use of a verse of the Quran

[1] For a detailed discussion of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's struggle against innovations and heresies as well as heretical groups, see Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 360-393.

[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 72.

[3] Cf., Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 129. Al-Uthaimeen points out that some people claim that the "Wahhabis" forbade tobacco because it is an innovation. Such is not true. They forbade it for other reasons.

[4] For a discussion of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's stance towards *ilm al-kalaam* (scholasticism), see Nusair, pp. 102-104.

[5] See, for example, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, pp. 131-132.

or a hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to prove any point."[1]

In reality, when the discussion of beliefs become so abstract, faith itself becomes an academic discussion wherein one forgets the real goal and purpose of this knowledge: to have it as the guide in one's life.[2]

ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's Belief in Allah

The aspect that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stressed the most during his entire life was the proper belief or faith (*imaan*) in Allah. This proper belief necessitates knowing what to believe in and properly enacting that knowledge in one's life. If one does not even understand what he claims to believe in, it will not be of any benefit to him. Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stated, "Stating this testimony of faith while being ignorant of its meaning is of no benefit. The hypocrites would say this statement of faith while they are below the disbelievers in the lowest abyss of the Hell-fire."[3]

The proper belief in *tauheed* is comprised of three interrelated components: (1) The belief in Allah alone as the Lord and Creator of this and all creation (*tauheed al-ruboobiyyah*); (2) The belief in the absolute uniqueness of Allah's names and attributes, wherein He does not share in any of the attributes of the created nor does any created being share in any of the attributes of the Divine (*tauheed al-asmaa wa al-sifaat*)[4]; (3) The belief in and practice of dedicating all acts of

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 263.

[2] To this day among some Muslims, speakers who give such philosophical or mystical ramblings captivate the imaginations of the listeners, being considered "deep." However, in reality, such words rarely amount to much substance and if they in any way contradict what the Quran or Sunnah say, those words are definitely false, even though the listener may be captivated by them.

[3] Quoted in ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 294-295.

[4] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab defines this category in the following manner: "Part of the belief in Allah is belief in what He attributed Himself with in His book and upon the tongue of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). [The belief in those attributes is] without distorting or denying their meanings. I believe that there is nothing similar to Allah and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. I do not deny about Him what He has described Himself with nor do I distort its proper meaning. Nor do I negate His names and signs. Nor do I discuss their nature or compare any of His attributes with the attributes of His

worship to Allah and Allah alone (*tauheed al-uloohiyya* or *tauheed al-ibaadah*).[1] All three are essential to make a person a Muslim and a believer. All three were emphasized and taught by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

However, although (1) is of great importance, it did not occupy the main position in Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings for very important reasons: it was something recognized by all the Muslims and, in fact, it was something acknowledged even by non-Muslims, such as the polytheists at the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This last point ibn Abdul-Wahhaab proved through very clear and explicit verses of the Quran. The numerous such verses include the following:

قُلْ مَن يَرْزُقُكُم مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ أَمَّن يَمْلِكُ ٱلسَّمْعَ وَٱلْأَبْصَٰرَ وَمَن يُخْرِجُ ٱلْحَىَّ مِنَ ٱلْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ ٱلْمَيِّتَ مِنَ ٱلْحَىِّ وَمَن يُدَبِّرُ ٱلْأَمْرَ ۚ فَسَيَقُولُونَ ٱللَّهُ ۚ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ

"Say: 'Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and the dead from the living? And who disposes the affairs?' They will say, 'Allah.' Say, 'Will you not then be afraid of Allah's punishment?'" (*Yoonus* 31).

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creatures, as Allah has no equal, similar one or partner. One cannot make an analogy between Him and His creation. Verily, Allah is most knowledgeable of Himself and of others, He is the most truthful in speech and the most eloquent in words." Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 8. In this way, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was following the way of the earliest scholars of Islam whose approach was the safest, wisest and most knowledgeable, as shall be noted in Chapter 5.

[1] In reality, the belief in (1) and (2) logically leads to (3). That is, given Allah being the only Creator and given His names and attributes it follows that no other being or creation deserves to be worshipped except Him. Hence, the logical and intelligent person would then direct all of his acts of worship to Allah alone, which is (3) above.

قُل لِّمَنِ ٱلْأَرْضُ وَمَن فِيهَآ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ ۚ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ قُلْ مَن رَّبُّ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ ٱلسَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ ٱلْعَرْشِ ٱلْعَظِيمِ ﴿٨٦﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ ۚ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ قُلْ مَنۢ بِيَدِهِۦ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ ۚ قُلْ فَأَنَّىٰ تُسْحَرُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾ بَلْ أَتَيْنَٰهُم بِٱلْحَقِّ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَٰذِبُونَ

“Say: ‘Whose is the earth and whatsoever is therein, if you know?’ They will say, ‘It is Allah’s!’ Say: ‘Yet will you not receive admonition?’ Say: ‘Who is the Lord of the seven heavens, and the Lord of the Great Throne?’ They will say, ‘(They belong) to Allah.’ Say: ‘Will you not then fear Allah?’ Say: ‘In whose Hand is the sovereignty of everything? And He protects (all), while against Whom there is no protector? (Say) if you know.’ They will say, ‘(All that belongs) to Allah.’ Say: ‘How then are you deceived and turned away from the truth? Nay, We have brought them the truth and, verily, they are liars” (*al-Muminoon* 84-90).

وَإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ ٱلضُّرُّ فِى ٱلْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَن تَدْعُونَ إِلَّآ إِيَّاهُ ۖ فَلَمَّا نَجَّىٰكُمْ إِلَى ٱلْبَرِّ أَعْرَضْتُمْ ۚ وَكَانَ ٱلْإِنسَٰنُ كَفُورًا

“And when harm touches you upon the sea, those that you call upon vanish from you except Him (Allah alone). But when He brings you safe to land, you turn away (from Him). And man is ever ungrateful” (*al-Israa* 67).

Thus, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote, “The meaning of Godhood (*uloohiyyah*) is not only that no one creates, provides sustenance, manages the affairs, gives life or gives death except Allah. The disbelievers who fought the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed all of that.”[1] Hence, as a corollary, it is

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 187. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab (vol. 7, p. 17) also explained when the one term *rabb* (“Lord”) also implies *ilaah* (“God”) and vice-versa as well as when they imply different concepts. He

not truly the dividing line between Islam and non-Islam and it was not the main point that the messengers themselves stressed. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stated, "The thing that enters one into Islam is *tauheed al-uloohiyyah*. This is wherein one does not worship anything except Allah—not even an angel close [to Allah] or a prophet who was sent [by Allah]."[1]

Tauheed* of *Ibaadah

Thus, Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab concentrated on the most important and relevant issue of his time and of all times: *tauheed al-ibaadah* or devoting all acts of worship to Allah alone. In fact, when defining *tauheed*, it would suffice many scholars to mention this *tauheed al-ibaadah*.

The meaning of *ilaah* ("God") is the worshipped one. Hence, *tauheed* is where one directs all of his acts of worship to Allah and Allah alone.[2] This is the purpose behind the creation of humans and this was the essence of the teachings of all the messengers sent to every people. Allah says,

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ ٱلْجِنَّ وَٱلْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

"I created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (alone)" (*al-Dhaariyaat* 56). Allah also says,

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِى كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱجْتَنِبُوا۟ ٱلطَّٰغُوتَ

"And verily, We have sent among every nation a messenger (proclaiming), 'Worship Allah (alone), and eschew all false gods'" (*al-Nahl* 36). It is probably based on these clear points from the Quran that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab began his mission with this message and emphasized it throughout his entire lifetime.

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stated, "If one were to say to you, 'What is the difference between *tauheed al-ruboobiyyah* and *tauheed al-*

demonstrates, for example, that when the person is asked in the grave, "Who is your Lord (*rabb*)?" it actually entails, "Who is your god (*ilaah*)?"

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 150.

[2] See ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 166. It though goes without saying that if one does not believe correctly in *tauheed al-ruboobiyyah*, one cannot possibly have the correct *tauheed*.

uloohiyyah?' Say: *Tauheed al-roboobiyyah* is concerned with the actions of the Lord, for example, creating, sustaining, giving life, giving death, sending down rain, growing plants and administering the affairs. [All of these are attributed to Allah alone.] *Tauheed al-uloohiyyah* is concerned with your deeds, o servant [of Allah], such as supplication, fear, hope, trust, repentance, longing, awe, taking of oaths, seeking help and other forms of worship [which must be directly to Allah alone]."[1]

Tauheed al-uloohiyyah was the aspect concerning which ibn Abdul-Wahhaab noted that the people were most ignorant, even though it can be called the essence of *tauheed*. The masses and their leaders were either ignorant concerning this issue or they did not fulfill their responsibility of implementing it properly. While speaking to some leaders, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote, "What is even more amazing than that is that you do not understand the testimony of 'there is none worthy of worship except Allah' and that you do not object to these idols that are worshipped in al-Kharj and elsewhere which are from the greater form of *shirk* according to the consensus of the people of knowledge."[2]

An important question concerns what this concept of *ibaadah* or worship of Allah actually comprises. In particular, a point of division between ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his opponents was that worship includes acts such as supplicating, seeking help, seeking rescue[3], making vows, prostrating, performing sacrifices and having ultimate trust and reliance in something. All of these acts must be directed to Allah alone. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was astonished that the people around him did not truly understand the meaning of "there is none worthy of worship except Allah." He wrote,

> The ignorant disbelievers understood the intent of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) by this statement. It means to be purely devoted to Allah and to deny and free oneself from everything that is worshipped besides Him. When he [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)] said to them,

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[1] Quoted in Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 301-302.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 278.
[3] Three very closely related terms are: الاستعاذة which is turning to Allah to have Him repel some evil; الاستعانة which is seeking help from Allah in either times of ease or hardship; and الاستغاثة which is seeking rescue from Allah during times of hardship and distress.

> “Say: There is none worthy of worship except Allah,” they responded with,
>
> أَجَعَلَ ٱلْآلِهَةَ إِلَـٰهًا وَاحِدًا إِنَّ هَـٰذَا لَشَيْءٌ عُجَابٌ
>
> “Has he made the gods (all) into one God? Truly this is a curious thing” (*Saad* 5). If you recognize that the ignorant disbelievers understood that, then it is amazing that the one who claims Islam does not understand the meaning of this expression to the extent that the ignorant of the disbelievers did. In fact, some of them think that it is just a matter of stating it with their tongues without belief in the heart concerning its meaning. The intelligent one among them thinks that its meaning is [only] that there is no creator or provider except Allah, and that no one administers the affairs except Allah. There is no goodness in a man when the ignorant of the disbelievers is more knowledgeable of “There is none worthy of worship except Allah” than he is.[1]

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab’s position on this issue can be easily justified via texts of the Quran and Sunnah. For example, a Muslim reads in every prayer,

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

“You alone do we worship and in You alone do we seek help.” Another verse states,

وَأَنَّ ٱلْمَسَـٰجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا۟ مَعَ ٱللَّهِ أَحَدًا

“The mosques are only for Allah, so do not invoke anyone along with Allah” (*Jinn* 18). The Prophet also said,

إذا سألت فاسأل الله وإذا استعنت فاستعن بالله

“If you ask, ask of Allah. If you seek help, seek help in Allah.”[2] The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said,

الدعاء هو العبادة

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, pp. 157-158.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi and others. It has been graded *sahih* by al-Albaani, Ahmad Shaakir, ibn Muhammad, al-Hilaali and Shuaib al-Arnaoot. For a lengthier discussion of the status of this hadith, see this author’s *Commentary on the Forty Hadith of al-Nawawi*, vol. 2, pp. 731-734.

"Supplication is the [essence of] worship."[1] The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said,

من مات وهو يدعو من دون الله نِدا دخلَ النار

"Whoever dies while calling upon other than Allah as a partner shall enter the Hell-fire." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

In the process of refuting some of the weak arguments of his opponents, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab distinguished, as can be proven in the example of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself, between the kind of asking of others that is permissible and that which is not permissible—in fact, that which is *shirk* (ascribing partners to Allah). In essence, a Muslim can ask another person to do something when that act is customarily within the means of a human being (as given to them by Allah). However, it is completely forbidden to ask of another human what is typically not within the ability of a human being. In fact, this can be a type of *shirk* or associating a partner with Allah in something that uniquely pertains to Allah. This would include asking them for guidance, in the sense of putting faith in one's heart, or asking from them things related to the unseen and unknowable, such as the occurrence of future events, asking them to cure one's illness and so forth. This latter category would definitely also include praying to people who are dead and in their graves, as they are now beyond having the means to bring about benefit for those living in this world.

On this issue of praying towards others and seeking help of a divine nature from them, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab noted that there is no difference between praying to idols, trees or shrubs and praying to prophets and "saints". All of those acts are *shirk* (ascribing of partners to Allah). There is no basis in the Quran or Sunnah for those acts. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions, for example, never prayed to Abraham or Moses while these prophets were in their graves, like the later Muslims

[1] Recorded by Abu Dawood, al-Nasaai, al-Tirmidhi and others. Graded *sahih* by al-Albaani. See Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami al-Sagheer* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1988), vol. 1, p. 641. An excellent discussion of the relationship between supplications and *tauheed* may be found in Jailaan al-Uroosi, *Al-Duaa wa Manzalatuhu min al-Aqeedah al-Islaamiyah* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Rushd, 1996), vol. 1, pp. 237-307.

prayed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and all of their saints, such as Abdul-Qaadir al-Jeelaani. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab makes the point that the people of Jaahiliyyah did not just pray to idols. But they and other disbelievers also prayed to angels, pious men, Jesus and so forth. All such acts are *shirk* and forms of worshipping someone other than Allah.

However, the correct and complete concept of *ibaadah* or worship of Allah comprises more than those acts described above. It also includes love for Allah. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab discussed four types of love. One type of love is a form of *shirk*, wherein one loves another as much or even more than he loves Allah. Allah in the Quran mentions this,

وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِّلَّهِ ۗ وَلَوْ يَرَى ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوٓا۟ إِذْ يَرَوْنَ ٱلْعَذَابَ أَنَّ ٱلْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَدِيدُ ٱلْعَذَابِ

"And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allah as rivals (to Allah). They love them as they love Allah. But those who believe, love Allah more (than anything else). If only those who do wrong could see, when they will see the torment, that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is severe in punishment" (*al-Baqarah* 165). Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab notes that this verse indicates that these people had a love for Allah, yet that was not sufficient to enter them into Islam. If that is their case, he asks, what must be the case with the one who loves another object of worship more than Allah or one who does not love Allah at all?[1]

Allah also says,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ مَن يَرْتَدَّ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِۦ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِى ٱللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُۥٓ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ يُجَٰهِدُونَ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَآئِمٍ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ ٱللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, p. 25.

"O you who believe! Whoever from among you turns back from his religion (Islam), Allah will bring a people whom He will love and they will love Him; humble towards the believers, stern towards the disbelievers, fighting for the sake of Allah, and never fearing the blame of the blamers. That is the Grace of Allah which He bestows upon whom He wills. And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower" (*al-Maaidah* 54). On the other hand, those with the strongest handhold of faith love Allah and love the people of truth and hate *shirk* (polytheism) and the people of *shirk*.[1] Furthermore, this correct love for Allah leads to a feeling in the heart of complete awe and submission to Allah. This, in turn, should lead to a complete willingness to submit to Allah. The reward for that will be Allah's love in return. Thus, Allah says,

قُلْ إِن كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ ٱللَّهَ فَٱتَّبِعُونِى يُحْبِبْكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"Say: If you (truly) love Allah, then follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (*ali-Imraan* 31).

Closely in association with the previous point comes the question of loyalty and disassociation. One cannot be a true Muslim until he believes in Allah alone as the only one worthy of worship and he denies all other forms of false worship. Thus, one must abandon polytheism (*shirk).* Indeed, one must also oppose and hate *shirk* and all those who stand for *shirk*, this should be a natural consequence of the love of Allah in one's heart. Thus, Allah says,

لَّا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْـَٔاخِرِ يُوَآدُّونَ مَنْ حَآدَّ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ وَلَوْ كَانُوٓاْ ءَابَآءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَآءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَٰنَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ ۚ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ كَتَبَ فِى

[1] Cf., Nusair, p. 177. Given the contemporary situation, it is perhaps important to note that hatred for the people of *shirk* does not include unjust or not having proper behavior towards them. One can hate another person due to his beliefs and way of life and still treat that person in a manner much more just than the one who claims that he loves that person.

قُلُوبِهِمُ ٱلْإِيمَـٰنَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ ۖ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّـٰتٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَـٰرُ خَـٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ رَضِىَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا۟ عَنْهُ ۚ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ حِزْبُ ٱللَّهِ ۚ أَلَآ إِنَّ حِزْبَ ٱللَّهِ هُمُ ٱلْمُفْلِحُونَ

"You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred (people). For such He has written Faith in their hearts, and strengthened them with light and true guidance) from Himself. And We will admit them to Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein (forever). Allah is pleased with them, and they with Him. They are the Party of Allah. Verily, it is the Party of Allah that will be the successful." (*al-Mujaadilah* 22). Allah also says,

قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِىٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَٱلَّذِينَ مَعَهُۥٓ إِذْ قَالُوا۟ لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَءَٰٓؤُا۟ مِنكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمُ ٱلْعَدَٰوَةُ وَٱلْبَغْضَآءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّىٰ تُؤْمِنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَحْدَهُۥٓ

"Indeed there has been an excellent example for you in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, 'Verily, we are free from you and whatever you worship besides Allaah, we have rejected you, and there has started between us and you, hostility and hatred forever, until you believe in Allaah Alone'" (*al-Mumtahinah* 4).[1]

Fear, awe and reverence also form part of this correct *tauheed*. One may have a "natural feeling of fear" in one's heart at specific moments in one's life but one must realize that nothing will happen save by the will of Allah. Hence, the true believer has no real fear of anything because he knows that, in reality, no one can harm or benefit him unless Allah so wills it. Hence, Allah says,

فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَٱخْشَوْنِى

"So fear them not, but fear Me" (*al-Baqarah* 150).

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[1] Cf., Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, pp. 44, 46 and 124.

Obedience is also an essential aspect of *tauheed*. One must obey Allah and that obedience must be above and beyond any other form of obedience. On numerous occasions, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab quoted the verse,

ٱتَّخَذُوٓا۟ أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَٰنَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلْمَسِيحَ ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَآ أُمِرُوٓا۟ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوٓا۟ إِلَٰهًا وَٰحِدًا ۖ لَّآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ سُبْحَٰنَهُۥ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

"They (Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allah, and (they also took as their Lord) Messiah, son of Mary, while they (Jews and Christians) were commanded to worship none but One God. None has the right to be worshipped but He. Praise and glory be to Him, (far above is He) from having the partners they associate (with Him)" (*al-Taubah* 31). In the explanation to this verse, and as quoted earlier, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab recounts how Adi ibn Haatim, the ex-Christian, told the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that they did not use to actually worship them. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told him that their worship of them is that whenever they permitted something forbidden, they would follow them and when they forbade something permitted, they would follow their directives.[1]

In reality, the experience of Islamic monotheism (*tauheed)* is the opposite of the experience of ascribing partners to Allah or *shirk*. The one who listens to, understands and submits to the word of Allah is not in need of heresies, partners with Allah and so forth. The one who knows Allah will have his heart filled with the love of Allah, trust in Him, hope in Him, reliance on Him and so forth. His heart will not be in need of any other central source of happiness. However, the one who is distant from the word of Allah and the true *tauheed* will definitely seek to find something that will fill a necessary void in his life. Thus, ibn Ghannaam noted that the one who is void of *tauheed* will definitely resort to *shirk*, whether he wants to or not. Similarly,

[1] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi. Although its chain definitely has some weakness to it, al-Albaani has concluded that the hadith is *hasan*. See Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan al-Tirmidhi* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Tarbiyyah al-Arabi li-Duwal al-Khaleej, 1988), vol. 3, p. 56.

the one who is void of following the Sunnah will definitely fall into heresies, whether he wants to or not.[1]

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and the Question of Who is a Muslim

A common belief at the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and, unfortunately, still a common belief today is that if an individual prays and pays zakat, there is no way that he could ever be considered a disbeliever, even if he does acts or believes in things that are described in the Shareeah as *kufr* or blasphemous. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab described this view in one of his letters where he said that even those who claimed to have knowledge would say, "Whoever says, 'There is no deity except Allah,' is not to be declared a disbeliever, even if he rejects the resurrection or rejects all of the Shareeah."[2]

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, though, came with a concept that must have been very strange to the people at that time as it is still strange to many Muslims today. He emphasized that not everyone who claims to be a Muslim or makes the testimony of faith is truly a Muslim and pleasing to Allah. He also demonstrated through clear hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that there are conditions to the testimony of faith.[3] Furthermore, he showed via the Quran and hadith that there are deeds that can take one out of the fold of Islam, even when one is praying, fasting and claiming to be a Muslim.[4] He referred to the actions of the Companions of the Prophet

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[1] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 70.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 41.
[3] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote, "The mere stating of it [that is, the testimony of faith] is not beneficial unless one acts upon what it entails, and this includes abandoning *shirk*." Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 137. Among the conditions he stated concerning the proper testimony of faith were knowledge, purity of faith, certainty and dying upon that belief. Cf., Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 13, pp. 70-71. See his lengthier discussion in vol. 1, pp. 363-364.
[4] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab mentioned the ten following aspects as negating one's faith: (1) associating partners with Allah; (2) placing someone as an intercessor between the human and Allah; (3) not believing that the polytheists are disbelievers or doubting that they are; (4) believing that some guidance is better than what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came with; (5) hating something the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came with; (6) ridiculing something of the faith; (7) practicing sorcery; (8)

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to demonstrate that faith also has minimum practical implications that must be met. He quoted Abu Bakr who said, in his determination to fight those who refused to pay the zakat, "Verily, the zakat is part of its right," that is it is part of the right of the statement, "There is none worthy of worship except Allah."[1] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also pointed to the Tribe of Haneefah who "accepted Islam" yet they also accepted Musailamah as a prophet and, thus, the Companions fought them due to their disbelief. Furthermore, the hypocrites during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed, fasted and even fought with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) but Allah has declared that they will be in the lowest abyss of the hell-fire.

In reality, this question of defining who is a Muslim is dealt with in virtually every major work of Islamic jurisprudence, in the section dealing with apostasy (*riddah*). Unfortunately, for the most part, it became something for academic or theoretic discussions only. Thus, people would fall into blasphemous acts, perhaps simply out of ignorance, and no one, even the scholars, would object. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab repeatedly noted how scholars would remain silent when people fell into disbelief (*kufr)* or polytheism (*shirk)*. Even if this is done out of ignorance, the scholars have a duty to correct the wrong. He says that if someone were to marry his own daughter or his aunt out of ignorance, those very scholars would not remain silent but would correct the situation. However, when it comes to the greater wrong of *shirk*, they allow the people to follow their ignorant ways.[2]

This in fact was one of the greatest points of contention between ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his opponents. He himself noted that his opponents actually agreed with him on the issues related to *tauheed* and *shirk* but they rejected his views on declaring people

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supporting the polytheists against the Muslims; (9) believing that some people are not required to follow the Shareeah; (10) turning away from the religion by not learning it or practicing it. See Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, pp. 385-387. These aspects that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stated demonstrate that disbelief can be in the form of a belief in the heart, a form of speech or an action that one has committed. When these ten aspects are studied in the light of what is mentioned as apostasy in the books of fiqh, it will be found that they are all consistent with what earlier scholars have stated.

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 138.

[2] Cf., Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 126.

disbelievers and fighting against them.[1] On another occasion, he stated that except for these two issues, his opponents recognized the truth of his explanation of the religion. However, he made it clear that the goal is not to declare others disbelievers or to fight against them. The goal is to get them to practice what they recognize as the truth.[2] (Al-Uthaimeen notes that everyone may have agreed with ibn Abdul-Wahhaab that *tauheed* is obligatory and that one must avoid *shirk*. However, they may not have agreed with him concerning what constitutes *shirk*. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself noted that some of his opponents consider his definition of *tauheed* to be an innovation. Obviously, the question of fighting certain people is directly related to what one considers *shirk*. There is a three-prong process that must be agreed upon. The opponent must first agree on what is *shirk*. After that, the other party must also agree that the conditions for declaring a person an unbeliever have been met. Only then can he agree to fight against the ones who have been declared disbelievers.[3] Although what al-Uthaimeen noted may be true, the main issues of concern for ibn Abdul-Wahhaab were issues that are agreed upon by the different fiqh schools.[4] Hence, even if one accepts al-Uthaimeen's reasoning for the opposition to Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, in reality, the opponents did not have much to stand on even from the perspective of their own schools.)

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was well aware of the conditions that must be met before anyone could be declared a disbeliever.[5] For him, the first thing that everyone must know or be taught is the true meaning of monotheism (*tauheed).* No one can be declared a disbeliever until *tauheed* is explained to him and then if, after that exposition, the person obstinately insists on following the deeds of

[1] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 117.
[2] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 118.
[3] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 118.
[4] When discussing those who do not pray, fast, pay zakat or perform hajj, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab noted that there was a difference of opinion over whether such lack of performance is disbelief. Then he stated, "We do not declare such people disbelievers… We only declare people disbelievers on those issues in which there is complete agreement among the scholars." Quoted in Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 122.
[5] In his reply to Sulaimaan ibn Suhaim, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab blames him for making a general statement declaring all the Qadariyyah disbelievers. See Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 88.

polytheism (*shirk*) and disbelief (*kufr*).[1] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stated, "We declare as disbelievers those who associate partners with Allah in His Godhood after the proofs of the falsehood of *shirk* have been made clear to him."[2] Also, no one can be declared a disbeliever simply on conjecture. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stated, "Whoever outwardly shows [an attachment] to Islam and we suspect that he has negated Islam, we do not declare him a disbeliever based on that conjecture, as what is apparent is not overridden by conjecture. Similarly, we do not declare as a disbeliever anyone from whom we do not know disbelief simply based on a negating factor that is mentioned about him that we have not verified."[3] Furthermore, no one can be declared a disbeliever except on those points that the Quran and Sunnah clearly declare to be disbelief. For example, the committing of a major sin, such as adultery, does not mean that a person has fallen into disbelief, as opposed to what the Khawarij and other extremist groups have believed. Thus ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stated, "We do not declare any Muslim to be a disbeliever simply due to a sin he committed."[4] Finally, he would only declare people disbelievers on the basis of issues that were agreed upon among the scholars. Hence, he wrote,

> The pillars of Islam are five. The first of them are the two statements testifying to the faith. Then come the [remaining] four pillars. If one affirms them but does not perform them out of laziness, we, even if we should fight him over what he has done, do not declare him a disbeliever for leaving those acts. The scholars have differed over the disbelief of one who abandons those acts out of laziness, without rejecting them [as obligations]. And we do not

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[1] As for those who died before being conveyed the true teachings of *tauheed*, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers refrained from declaring any such individuals to be disbelievers. In fact, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's son Abdullah stated that not only were the ignorant to be excused due to their ignorance but even the scholars should be excused before their time—before the coming of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab—since, in most areas, there was no one who stood for the truth with his speech and his actions. Cf., Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 124.

[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 60.

[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 24. He also said (vol. 7, p. 25), "Those of the enemies who say that I declare people disbelievers based on conjecture have stated a grave lie. They intend by that simply to drive people away from the religion of Allah and His Messenger."

[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 11. For more details concerning his perspective, see Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 233.

> declare anyone a disbeliever save based on what all the scholars agree upon, and that is the two testimonies of faith.[1]

Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, Islamic Jurisprudence, Juristic Reasoning and Blind Following

Abu Sulaimaan stated if the correction of people's faith and beliefs was the most important aspect of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's mission, the second most important aspect was correcting the juristic methodology of the Muslims.[2]

As noted above, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab firmly believed that Allah has made it obligatory upon all humans to obey Him and to obey His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). There is no absolute obedience to anyone other than the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in what he conveyed from Allah via the revelation of the Quran or his Sunnah. The Quran was revealed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to bring mankind out of darkness into light. Turning away from this revelation is nothing but disbelief. Hence, Allah says,

قُلْ أَطِيعُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلرَّسُولَ ۖ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا۟ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ

"Say: 'Obey Allah and the Messenger.' But if they turn away, then Allah does not like the disbelievers" (*ali-Imraan* 32). The Prophet's Sunnah is a portion of that revelation and "completes" it by giving further details of Allah's revelation.

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote, "If an authentic act of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is made clear to us, we act according to it. We do not put anyone's statement before it, regardless of who it may be. Instead, we receive it with complete acceptance and submission. This is because in our hearts, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is greater and more important than to give precedence to anybody else's statement. This is what we believe and this is how we worship Allah."[3]

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 4, section of *Fataawa*, p. 9.
[2] Abu Sulaimaan, vol. 1, p. 379.
[3] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 252.

This means that the Quran and Sunnah are the ultimate authorities. If something is definitively stated in the Quran or Sunnah, there is no room for personal reasoning or following any other view. If there should arise any difference of opinion, that difference should be resolved by reference to the ultimate authorities. This is, in fact, what Allah has commanded in the Quran,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَمۡرِ مِنكُمۡۖ فَإِن تَنَٰزَعۡتُمۡ فِي شَيۡءٖ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَٱلرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمۡ تُؤۡمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيۡرٞ وَأَحۡسَنُ تَأۡوِيلًا

"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allah and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination." (*al-Nisaa* 59). Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab concluded from this verse, "We know definitively that whoever takes an issue disputed among the people back to the Book and the Sunnah shall find therein what shall resolve the dispute."[1] Any other approach or taking anyone or anything else as the final authority is straying from Allah's straight path. Furthermore, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stressed that Allah gave the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) the most comprehensive of speech. One of his sentences actually touches upon a number of issues for the one who is discerning enough to understand his words.[2]

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote, "There is no difference of opinion between us and you that if the people of knowledge agree upon something, it is obligatory to follow them. The question though is when they differ. Is it then obligatory upon me to accept the truth from wherever it comes and to refer the issue to Allah and His messenger, following the example of the people of knowledge, or shall I simply adopt one of their [the scholars'] views without any proof? You follow the latter approach…while I follow the former."[3]

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[1] Quoted in Nusair, pp. 70-71.
[2] Cf., Nusair, p. 70.
[3] Quoted in Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 132.

In general, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his close followers were Hanbalis but were not absolute in their following of that school. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote, "We, and all praise be to Allah, are followers and not innovators, upon the school of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal."[1] Even though he followed that school since the time of his youth, he definitely was not a blind, obstinate follower who supported it against all other views. He would follow Ahmad's school when it was supported by evidence.[2] At other times, he would follow the other schools if their views were stronger in the light of the evidence. Thus, he stated, "We are followers of the Book, the Sunnah, and the pious predecessors of the Nation and what is supported in the opinions of the four Imams, Abu Hanifah al-Numaan ibn Thaabit, Malik ibn Anas, Muhammad ibn Idrees [al-Shafi'ee] and Ahmad ibn Hanbal, may Allah have mercy on them."[3] Even with the two scholars who were perhaps the dearest to him, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab took this same approach. He wrote, "In our opinion, Imam ibn al-Qayyim and his teacher [ibn Taimiyyah] are Imams of the *Ahl al-Sunnah* and their books are the most noble of books. However, we do not blindly follow them in every issue. Everybody has some of his statements taken and some left save for our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)."[4]

Furthermore, he would accept the right of the people to follow the opinions of the other schools. He stated, "As for our school, it is the school of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the Imam of the *Ahl al-Sunnah*. We do not object to the people of the four schools as long as they do not contradict a text of the Book, the Sunnah, Consensus and the statements of their majority."[5] He made it very clear, though, that

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 40.

[2] See ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 34.

[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 96.

[4] Quoted in Nusair, p. 79. She (p. 79) notes the following issues in which ibn Abdul-Wahhaab differed from ibn Taimiyyah and ibn al-Qayyim: the question of three divorces being stated at one time, the issue of religious endowments, the question of the permission of making oaths and the obligation to fulfill them. Abu Sulaimaan (vol. 1, p. 392) noted that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would usually agree with ibn Taimiyyah's conclusions when discussing fiqh.

[5] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 107. In another passage, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab explicitly states that he does not object to anyone following any of the four Sunni schools of fiqh but he does not allow for the following of the Shiite or Zaidi schools because, he said, they were not recorded accurately and passed on properly. Al-Ruwaishid notes that this conclusion was simply

the individual's intention in cases of difference of opinion must be to obey Allah. He said,

> In matters in which there is a difference of opinion, it is a must that the believer make his concern and intent the knowing of Allah's and His Messenger's command and to act upon that. He must respect and regard the people of knowledge, even if they make a mistake. However, he cannot take them as lords besides Allah. Such is the path of those who have [Allah's] blessing upon them. To ignore their statements and not respect them is the path of those who have [Allah's] anger upon them. And to take them as lords other than Allah—that is, if it is said to them Allah or Allah's Messenger said, they reply, "These people [that is, the scholars] are more knowledgeable than us"—is the path of those who have gone astray.[1]

In fact, in this way, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers were truly following the teachings of the founding scholars of the schools who prohibited a blind adherence to their opinions or adherence to any opinion that contradicts the Quran or Sunnah.[2]

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers accepted the authority of *ijmaa* or consensus (although McDonald, Bethmann and Zweimer claimed otherwise[3]). In addition to the quote above in which ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stated that it is obligatory to follow the people of knowledge when they agree upon something, he also stated, "What the

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due to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers not having the proper knowledge of those two schools, as such fiqh schools were recorded and passed down. See Abdullah al-Ruwaishid, *Al-Imaam al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab fi al-Tareekh* (Raabitah al-Adab al-Hadeeth, 1984), vol. 1, p. 131.

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 3, section of *Fataawa*, p. 97. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was also very much aware of some of the causes of differences of opinion among the scholars. For example, he wrote, "The sound evidences do not contradict each other. In fact, what is correct simply verifies other correct statements. However, one person could be mistaken in the evidence that he uses. He could have used a hadith which is not authentic or he could have misunderstood an authentic statement." Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 3, section of *Fataawa*, p. 32. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was also well aware of Islamic legal theory, as can be seen in the discussion by Abu Sulaimaan, vol. 1, pp. 392ff.

[2] See the numerous quotes from the different Imams of the four schools in Usrah, pp. 94-96.

[3] Cf., Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 132. However, it is clear that what ibn Abdul-Wahhaab meant by consensus is not simply the agreement of the four schools. See Nusair, p. 74.

people of knowledge have agreed upon is the truth."[1] However, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab did not consider the "majority" to be the same as *ijmaa* (consensus), especially when the "majority" did something that contradicted the Quran and Sunnah. Even if scholars were silent or supported such deeds, they could not be considered *ijmaa* as no sound *ijmaa* can be made in contradiction to the Quran and Sunnah. The Muslim community cannot all agree on an error and if such an *ijmaa* supposedly exists, it would mean that the Quran or Sunnah is wrong or the *ijmaa* is not true. Thus, no such *ijmaa* could possibly exist.

Thus, one can see that the methodology of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab when it came to fiqh was to first resort to the Quran and Sunnah. If a clear injunction was in either of those two sources, it must be followed. If nothing decisive is found therein, the consensus of the scholars, especially of the Companions and the Followers, is to be sought. After that comes the realm of *ijtihaad* (juristic reasoning), wherein the scholar must base his conclusion on his understanding of Allah's revelation.

Based on this methodology, some opponents claimed that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers claimed a complete right to *ijtihaad* while rejecting any form of "blind obedience" (*taqleed*) or any respect for the four schools of jurisprudence (*fiqh*). This was not the case. However, as al-Uthaimeen noted, they did reject the then prevailing concept that no one has the ability to derive rules directly from the Quran and Sunnah and that everyone must follow the opinions of the scholars without making any type of *ijtihaad*.[2] In reality, the popularly accepted view of *taqleed* completely breaks off any links between the scholar and the revelation from Allah. The scholar is not allowed to turn to the true source of guidance but is required simply to turn to the books of fiqh, which are no more than the efforts of scholarly but fallible human beings. In essence, this approach makes the Quran and Sunnah meaningless. It is that approach which ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers rejected.[3]

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[1] Quoted in Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 133.
[2] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 133.
[3] In fact, one of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's staunchest opponents, Sulaimaan ibn Suhaim, rejected ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's proofs from the Quran and Sunnah on the basis that he (meaning Sulaimaan) was not qualified to understand those evidences directly from the Quran and Sunnah. He was only able to understand what the later scholars wrote in their books of fiqh. On more than

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's son Abdullah explained their position the best when he stated, "We are not deserving of the level of absolute *ijtihaad*[1] nor does any of us claim it. But concerning some issues [of our Hanbali school], if there is a clear definitive text from the Book or the Sunnah which is not abrogated, particularized or in conflict with any stronger evidence and it is followed by one of the four Imams, then we follow it and we leave the view of the Hanbali school."[2] Thus, as al-Uthaimeen writes, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers avoided both extremes when it comes to *ijtihaad*. They avoided the extreme that states that *ijtihaad* is always and under all circumstances permissible by virtually anyone. They also avoided the opposite extreme that states that the door to *ijtihaad* is now closed and is not permissible for anyone.[3] It should also be noted that they avoided the extreme that places so many conditions upon the one making *ijtihaad* that, as ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself stated, "one may not even find all those qualities in Abu Bakr or Umar."[4]

Also on the question of *taqleed* ("blind obedience"), ibn Abdul-Wahhaab avoided the prevalent extreme of his time as well as the opposite extreme that has become somewhat prevalent in the current age. In general, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers attached themselves to the Hanbali school of fiqh. However, it is not obligatory, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab argued, for an individual to

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one occasion, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab quoted his opponents as saying, "It is not allowed for us to act upon the Quran, nor by the statements of the Messenger nor by the statements of the earlier scholars. We do not follow anything save what is stated by the later scholars." (See Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 38 and p. 157.) Elsewhere, he quoted them as saying, "Whoever acts upon the Quran has committed disbelief and the Quran is not to be interpreted." (See ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 89.) Hence, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab resorted to a book that Sulaimaan respected, *al-Iqnaa*, to demonstrate to Sulaimaan that certain actions were acts of *shirk* and disbelief. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab ended his response with the words, "This book of yours declares you to be disbelievers." However, even that did not change Sulaimaan's stance. Cf., Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 350-351; Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 126.

[1] The level of "absolute *ijtihaad*" is that of the four Imams (Malik, Abu Hanifah, al-Shafi'ee and Ahmad). Other scholars who have not reached that level are still able to make *ijtihaad* on a partial basis, such as on secondary issues not touched upon by earlier scholars.

[2] Quoted in Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 134.

[3] Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 134.

[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, p. 396.

completely follow another human in his religion except for his following of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In fact, he noted that the four Imams warned their followers concerning blind obedience and encouraged them to follow the truth from the Quran and Sunnah whenever it is made clear to them.[1] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, though, recognized that even a scholar may have to make *taqleed*, if he does not have the time, resources or ability to make an individual judgment concerning an issue.

Based on ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings, his followers have divided *taqleed* into three categories. The first category is a forbidden type of *taqleed* wherein one follows an Imam even though his opinion clearly contradicts the Quran or the Sunnah. In following the Imam in such a case, the follower is practically making the Imam his Lord or a prophet. This kind of blind obedience in the face of clear revelation from God was greatly censured by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers. (In fact, this is the kind of blind obedience that led many people into a continual following of *shirk*. Thus ibn Abdul-Wahhaab noted about those who blindly follow, "Their religion is built upon some principles, the greatest being *taqleed*. It is the greatest maxim for all the disbelievers, from the first to the last of them."[2]) In addition, another form of *taqleed* that is forbidden is *taqleed* with respect to the essentials of the faith. That is, according to Nusair, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab believed that it is obligatory for everyone to know about Allah, the Messenger and the essentials of the faith. On these types of matter, *taqleed* is not allowed.[3]

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[1] For a discussion of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's proofs against having to blindly follow one of the four schools, see al-Atram, vol. 1, pp. 294-303.

[2] Quoted in Nusair, p. 82. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab must have been alluding to the facts stated in the numerous verses of the Quran. Such as, "When it is said to them, 'Follow what Allah has revealed,' they say, 'Nay! We shall follow the ways of our fathers.' What! Even though their fathers were void of wisdom and guidance" (*al-Baqarah* 170); "When they are told to follow the (Revelation) that Allah has sent down, they say, 'Nay, we shall follow the ways that we found our fathers (following).' What! Even if it is Satan beckoning them to the Penalty of the (Blazing) Fire?" (*Luqmaan* 21).

[3] Cf., Nusair, pp. 84-85. On this point, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab quoted the hadith in which the hypocrites will be asked in the grave about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and they will answer, "Uh, uh, I do not know. I heard the people say something and I simply said what they said." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

A second category of *taqleed* is a blameworthy but not a forbidden category. This is where a person who has the means to research an issue relies on *taqleed* rather than determining the truth for himself. Although this may be considered not completely forbidden, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab still laid down some conditions for resorting to this practice.[1]

The third category is a permissible type of *taqleed*. This type of *taqleed* is open to the commoners and to those whose knowledge is restricted, such as those who are aware of only one school of fiqh. For these people, they have no choice but to make *taqleed* and to follow the opinions of the true scholars.[2] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab advised, "If the truth becomes clear to you, follow it. If it is not clear to you and you are in need of acting, follow the one whose religion and knowledge you trust."[3]

Thus, one can see that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was completely in favor of reviving the concept of *ijtihaad* and seeking the solutions of contemporary problems from the Quran and Sunnah. In this manner, he actually was not being "innovative" but he was returning the Muslim nation to the understanding that the early generations had. As Nusair noted, "The first generations of Muslims passed on and they concluded on a consensus that *ijtihaad* is an obligation. It is a communal obligation upon the Muslim Nation as a whole. If they leave it completely, they are sinful. But it is sufficient if some of the capable scholar fulfill this obligation."[4] This is in implementation of Allah's command,

فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِن كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا۟ فِى ٱلدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا۟ قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوٓا۟ إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ

"Of every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that they (who are left behind) may get instructions in (Islaamic) religion, and that they may warn their people when they return to them, so that they may beware (of evil)" (*al-Taubah* 122).

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[1] See Nusair, pp. 85-86; al-Atram, vol. 1, p. 290.
[2] Cf., Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 135.
[3] Quoted in Nusair, p. 83.
[4] Nusair, p. 82.

Although the discussion of *ijtihaad* and *taqleed* is often seen in the light of fiqh, its ramifications go well beyond fiqh. The idea that the door to *ijtihaad* was closed actually closed people's thinking in many ways. It was the final barrier between the people and the revelation, as in matters of *aqeedah* and "spirituality" (mysticism, Sufism) wherein many had already began to doubt the relevance of the words of revelation. Hence, to revive the thinking process, it was necessary to reestablish that link between the Muslim individual, especially the scholar, and the Quran and Sunnah. When that is done, the decay in fiqh as well as the decay in matters of faith (*aqeedah*) and spirituality can be overcome. As Nusair noted, this was the only way to make the proper bridge between the rightful place of human thinking and the authority of revelation. She states that nobody was able to fulfill that role of breaking down such barriers until Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab came along and blazed the path. True monotheism (*tauheed*) was lost to ascribing partners to Allah (*shirk*) precisely due to the lack of knowledge concerning the way of the early generations of pious Muslims. Instead of going to the sources of guidance, people blindly adhered to later writings. It was Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab who brought his followers back to the Quran and Sunnah.[1]

The influence and impact of this approach was great indeed. Siddiqi wrote,

> The leaders of thought began to sift the whole of Islamic literature handed down to them by their ancestors and with admirable skill purified Islam of all those un-Islamic practices which had nothing to do with the teachings of Islam but had unfortunately become parts of Islamic culture. Thus, as a result of the efforts of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab a critical attitude was developed amongst Muslim scholars; they would not accept anything which came down from the past without testing its validity on the basis of the Quran and the Sunnah.
>
> Thus, the first change that was visible in society was an urge for stock-taking of Fiqh. It was felt that the pristine simplicity and reasonableness of the Shariah had almost been buried in a forest of subjective deductions propounded by scholars several years ago. These deductions, however valuable, could not be held final for all times. New problems had cropped up with the march of time, and

[1] Nusair, p. 10-11.

> these demanded new solutions in the light of the Quran and the Sunnah. Thus, with the development of the critical attitude, which in itself was the direct result of Islamic revival, the gates of *ijtihad* sealed for six hundred years were opened again. The whole of Muslim society was awakened to the need of a fresh approach towards Fiqh.[1]

Indeed, it is one of the greatest achievements of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab that he was never taken as the ultimate authority—above the ultimate authorities of the Quran and Sunnah that he was calling the people to. His followers embodied this spirit of *ijtihaad* and continual seeking of the truth via the original revelations of the Quran. Thus, Idris noted,

> The so-called Wahhabi 'ulama do not really *follow* any special teachings of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, but only his call for going back to the fundamental sources of the Islamic religion. This is amply demonstrated in their attitude towards his writings. They read them, but not necessarily all of them; they do not confine themselves to them, but go to the original sources whence he got his teachings, and to the earlier great scholars who helped him shape his views and teachings; they do not confine themselves to the problems which he tackled, but deal with problems of their times, each in his own manner and style. While having great deference for him, they do not hesitate to differ with him on some points. But this in itself is a good measure of the success of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's movement.[2]

In sum, one can say that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's approach to fiqh was an approach that was based on the original intent of the Shareeah, going back to its original sources, freeing it from the restrictions of the human conclusions of later scholars and returning it to its flexibility needed to meet the needs of humans in all times and places.[3]

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[1] Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, "Renaissance in Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon: Muhammad Bin 'Abd al-Wahhab and His Movement," In M. M. Sharif, ed., *A History of Muslim Philosophy* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Otto Harrassowitz, 1966), vol. 2, p. 1449.

[2] Jaafar Idris. "The Islamic Fundamentalism of the Wahhabi Movement." At www.jaafaridris.com/English/Books/Wahhabism.htm, p. 11.

[3] Cf., Abu Sulaimaan, vol. 1, p. 413.

Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and *Dawah* [Propagating the Faith], Ordering Good and Eradicating Evil

In Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's view, the noblest activity—after affirming true monotheism (*tauheed*) and avoiding associating partners with Allah in one's own life—is the calling of others to the path that is pleasing to Allah. He stated that the greatest and most noble position with Allah is that of calling others to Him. He then quoted the verse,

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّن دَعَآ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ

"Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to Allah" (*Fussilat* 33), and the hadith,

فَوالله لَأَنْ يهدى بِك رجلٌ واحد خير لَك من حمرِ النعمِ

"By Allah, one person being guided by you is better for you than the best quality camels."[1] (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, therefore, stressed the teaching and propagating of this religion. He stressed that it must be taught to all, the scholars, the commoners, men, women, young and old.[2] For example, he stated about the basics of the religion and the dangers of *shirk*, "It is obligatory to spread this [truth] among the people, the women and the men. And may Allah have mercy for the one who fulfills the obligation upon him."[3] Indeed, in studying ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's life and teachings one can declare that he was all about bringing people to the proper way of worship of Allah—thus benefiting the individual himself, the society as a whole and all of mankind. He was not about power, riches or control but about advising others for the sake of Allah, as he wrote in a letter, "Do not think that these words of mine

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[1] See Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 48. The best quality camels were the most precious form of wealth in the eyes of the people to whom the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was speaking .

[2] In one of his letters, he notes that his opponent al-Muwais considered the teaching of the meaning of, "There is no deity except Allah," to be an innovation. Al-Muwais claimed that the young girls of Hirmah and their families, not to speak of their men, knew the meaning of this expression. See Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 173.

[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 127.

are words of blame or against you. By Allah, the One besides whom there is no other deity, they are [words of] sincere advice."[1]

The Importance of Ordering Good and Eradicating Evil

According to ibn Bishr, there was no one in Najd before ibn Abdul-Wahhaab who truly fulfilled this position of ordering good and eradicating evil. Thus Najd reached the level that it reached.[2]

Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab clearly recognized the importance for society as a whole of ordering good and eradicating evil. As Jameelah noted, "[He] was not content merely to preach Islam but was determined to build a society where Islam in its undiluted purity would be embodied as a practical scheme of life."[3] In order to achieve that goal, it is not sufficient simply to purify one's own soul. Instead, one must spread the teachings as well as encourage others to also purify their souls. However, when it comes to the rights of the society, this must also include the next step of ordering what is good and forbidding what is evil.

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab recognized that virtually all of the opposition that he was facing was not due to the fact that he tried to purify his own life but due to the fact that, for the sake of Allah, he attempted to purify the society around him. For example, in reference to the destruction of the mausoleums, he stated, "The trials that we are experiencing that you and others have heard about it are the result of the destruction of the tombs that were built over the graves of the pious in our land."[4]

Furthermore, Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab displayed his contempt for those people in positions of authority who did not object to even the greatest of sins and *shirk*. He wrote to such people, "What is wrong with you that you do not explain to the people that such practices are disbelief in Allah that take them out of the fold of Islam?… How is it permissible for you to conceal that and turn away from that while Allah has taken a pact from those who have been given the Book that

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 20.
[2] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 169.
[3] Jameelah, pp. 117-118.
[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 40.

they will explain it to the people and not conceal it?”[1] Often he would quote Allah’s words,

وَإِذۡ أَخَذَ ٱللَّهُ مِيثَٰقَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُۥ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكۡتُمُونَهُۥ فَنَبَذُوهُ وَرَآءَ ظُهُورِهِمۡ وَٱشۡتَرَوۡاْ بِهِۦ ثَمَنٗا قَلِيلٗاۖ فَبِئۡسَ مَا يَشۡتَرُونَ

“(And remember) when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the Scripture (Jews and Christians) to make it known and clear to mankind, and not to hide it, but they threw it away behind their backs, and purchased with it some miserable gain! And indeed worst is that which they bought” (***ali-Imraan*** 187). On another occasion he wrote, “Woe to those judges and rulers who do not change these [evil practices] while they have the ability to do so.”[2]

In fact, for ibn Abdul-Wahhaab ordering good and eradicating evil is an obligation that one has towards Allah and to accept any request not to perform that act is tantamount to disobeying Allah. He stated, “If you mean that you want me to remain silent in the presence of disbelief and hypocrisy… you should not make such a request. And there is no obedience to anyone in a matter of disobedience to Allah.”[3]

Until one understands that absolute obedience must be to Allah alone, it may be difficult for an individual to undertake the job of ordering good and eradicating evil. This is because this task often times requires one to go against the customs, practices and wants of the people. The further a society has drifted from the Islamic norms, the greater this task will be and the more opposition one may face. However, this is a matter of instituting what is beloved to Allah. One cannot be swayed by the desires of the people. Allah’s pleasure must take precedence over the pleasure of all mankind. This is a point that

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 126.

[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 178. One of the important ways by which ibn Abdul-Wahhaab affected change was by sending governors and judges to the different tribes and cities to administer truth and uphold righteousness. Hence, Burckhardt (vol. 1, pp. 288-289) noted, “Saoud, the Wahaby chief, knowing the great impartiality and injustice of their [the Bedouin judges’] decisions, and their readiness to accept bribes, abolished them all over his dominions, and sent to the Bedouins, in their place, kadhys [that is, judges] from Derayeh, well-informed men, paid out of the public treasury, and acknowledged even by the enemies to be persons of incorruptible justice.”

[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 319.

ibn Abdul-Wahhaab understood very well. In one of his letters he wrote,

> If you find it difficult to go against the people, then think about Allah's statements,
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> ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَٰكَ عَلَىٰ شَرِيعَةٍ مِّنَ ٱلْأَمْرِ فَٱتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَآءَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّهُمْ لَن يُغْنُوا۟ عَنكَ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ شَيْـًٔا
>
> "Then We put thee on the (right) Way of Religion: so follow that (Way), and follow not the desires of those who know not. They will be of no use to you in the sight of Allah" [*al-Jaathiyah* 18-19], and,
>
> وَإِن تُطِعْ أَكْثَرَ مَن فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ
>
> "And if you obey most of those on earth, they will mislead you far away from Allah's Path" [*al-Anaam* 116]. And ponder over his [the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)] statement in the *Sahih*,
>
> بدأ الإسلام غريبا وسيعود كما بدأ غريبا
>
> "Islam began as something strange and it shall revert to being strange as it began." [Recorded by Muslim.][1]

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also had a good understanding of why it is difficult for many people, especially those looked upon as people of authority and knowledge, to follow the truth while they have been straying in the past. Thus he understood why it is that even while presenting the clear truth from the Quran and Sunnah, people will still not listen and will continue to adhere to the way of life that they have been living. He gave four reasons for this behavior: (1) They do not recognize the truth even though some of them claim to be scholars; (2) the truth goes against what they grew up with and what they are accustomed to, and it is very difficult to go against one's customs; (3) the truth is contrary to the "knowledge" that they have and that they have grown to love, much like the Tribe of Israel grew to love the

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 57.

golden calf; and (4) this religion attempts to get between them and the forbidden, evil wealth that they are acquiring.[1]

His Methodology of *Dawah* [Propagating the Faith] and of Ordering Good and Eradicating Evil

The one who is propagating the faith of Islam has many avenues open to him. In general, these avenues may be divided into two major categories: those of speech and conveyance and those of action. In the first category, one finds sermons[2], speeches, lessons, religious *responsa*, personal advice, letters, debates[3], books and admonishing by speech. In the latter category, one finds jihad, changing the evil with one's hands, distributing books, giving presents, softening the hearts with wealth, training students and sending them with financial assistance to other areas, building Islamic centers and mosques.[4] One finds that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab took advantage of each and every one of these possible means. For example, in 1167 A.H., he sent his student and scholar Isa ibn Qaasim to Riyadh to teach them their faith. Isa attracted such a devoted following in Riyadh that when Dahhaam ibn Dawwaas violated the pact between him and Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, these students fled with Isa ibn Qaasim from Riyadh, leaving their wealth and possessions behind for the sake of the faith.[5]

In studying Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's approach to ordering good and eradicating evil, it is clear that he kept in mind the very principles that must guide this concept. For example, he would move from one step to another depending on what was most appropriate given the circumstances and what was sanctioned by the Shareeah. A very important principle that he stressed is that if an action to remove a harm leads to greater harm, then the action is not to

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[1] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 464, quoted from ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 185.

[2] In volume eleven of *Muallifaat*, there is a collection of thirty-eight of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's sermons (*khutbah*s). In general, they are very succinct and replete with verses of the Quran and hadith.

[3] For a description of the importance of debating and Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's capability of debate, see Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 120-124.

[4] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 103.

[5] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 2, p. 19; Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 118.

be taken. In a letter he wrote to try to solve a dispute among the people of al-Sudair, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stated,

> The scholars mention that if the action of forbidding an evil causes division, it is not allowed to forbid that evil. Remember Allah and act upon what I am mentioning to you and understand it properly. If you do not do so, then your action of forbidding an evil will cause more harm for the religion. And a Muslim never works except to make better his religion and his worldly life.[1]

Before taking any step against an evil, he would verify the existence of that evil. Once he advised his followers of two principles: "First, do not be hasty. Do not speak except after verification for lying is abundant. Second, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to know the individual hypocrites but he would accept their outward deeds and leave their inward aspects to Allah."[2]

At the beginning of his mission, when the people were most ignorant concerning the polytheistic acts that they had fallen into, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would try to use kind words and indirect inferences to let the people understand their ignorance. Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Hasan, the grandson of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, stated, "At the beginning of his call, when our Shaikh would hear someone supplicating to Zaid ibn al-Khattaab, he would say, 'Allah is better than Zaid,' getting them used to denying *shirk* with soft words—taking into consideration what was most beneficial and keeping them from fleeing from him."[3] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself said that the people of Basra who had fallen into polytheistic practices would come to him with their arguments and he would simply say to them, "Worship is not proper unless directed to Allah alone," and all of them would be confounded.[4] Since ibn Abdul-Wahhaab knew that the people were very ignorant with respect to the faith and that what he was propagating was very strange to them, he knew he had to take an approach that was consistent with their level of understanding at that time. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab made this point very clear when he stated in a letter, "If it were not that the people until this time still do not know the religion of the Messenger and if it were not that they still object to

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, pp. 296-297.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 285.
[3] Quoted in Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 125.
[4] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 28.

the matter that they are unfamiliar with, the issue would have been much different. I swear by Allah, the One besides whom there is no other God, if the people understood the matter correctly, I would give the ruling that the blood of ibn Suhaim and his likes are permissible [due to their clear apostasy] and I would have ordered them killed."[1]

Ibn Baaz states that such an approach was most appropriate at the time when ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was in Basra since he was dealing with a people who had become very strange and distant from his message. Hence, he had to be gentle with them and take them step by step away from that which they were engrossed in. However, even with that approach, he was not successful and the people of Basra accused him of causing trouble and he was forced to flee.[2]

What ibn Baaz stated concerning that particular time and environment may be true but in reality Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab saw gentleness and kindness as a key basic characteristic in ordering good, eradicating evil and calling others to the path of Allah. He once wrote, "It is a must that the caller to the path of Allah calls in the way that is best—save with respect to those who go beyond the limits. Allah even ordered His two messengers Moses and Aaron to say kind words to the Pharaoh so that he may reflect or have fear of Allah."[3] In a general letter addressed to his brethren, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote,

> Some of the people of the religion object to a wrong—and while they are right in doing so they do so incorrectly in a harsh manner that causes division among the brethren. Allah has said,
>
> يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِۦ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَٱعْتَصِمُواْ بِحَبْلِ ٱللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُواْ
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> "O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared and die not except in a state of Islam (as Muslims) with complete submission to Allaah. And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah, and

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[1] Quoted from ibn Ghannaam by Abdullah al-Uthaimeen, ""*al-Rasaail al-Shakhsiyyah li-l-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab*" in *Buhooth Nadwah Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab* (Riyadh: Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, 1991), vol. 1, p. 108.

[2] Abdul-Mushin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 125-126. Cf., al-Uthaimeen, "*Rasaail*", vol. 1, pp. 107-108.

[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, pp. 250-251.

> be not divided among yourselves" (*ali-Imraan* 102-103). The people of knowledge say that the one who orders good and forbids evil needs three [qualities]: He must have knowledge of what he is ordering or what he is forbidding; he must be gentle when he is ordering something or when he is forbidding something; and he must have patience concerning the harm that is going to come [to him due to his noble act].[1]

In addition, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would often remind the people of Allah and of heaven or hell that was awaiting them. In his letter to Ahmad ibn Ibraaheem he wrote, "What is the worth of the religion to you? What is Allah's pleasure and Paradise worth to you? What is Allah's Hell and wrath worth to you?" He wrote to Abdullah ibn Isa saying, "Flee with your religion for Paradise and Hell are in front of you."[2]

Although gentleness is a general principle related to ordering good and eradicating evil, it is not the only principle that is resorted to under all and every circumstance.[3] The next step is to use harsh words when reprimanding others. An example of this step can be found in the words of the Prophet Abraham (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who told his people,

أُفٍّ لَّكُمْ وَلِمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

"Fie upon you, and upon that which you worship besides Allaah! Have you then no sense?" (*al-Anbiyaa* 67). Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stated that he would not resort to this step unless he found that kindness did not produce any result.[4] However, ibn Baaz notes, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab rarely resorted to this level. He would do so only with those who were completely obstinate and showed a refusal for any kind of rational discourse. When writing to his great opponent Sulaimaan ibn Suhaim, he wrote, "You are an ignorant person, a polytheist who hates the religion of Allah."[5] On another occasion, he stated, "A beast cannot understand the meaning of worship."[6] He himself recognized

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Mualllifaat*, vol. 7, p. 296.
[2] Cf., Abdul-Mushin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 126-127.
[3] For more on this point, see Fadhl Ilaahi, *Min Sifaat al-Daaiyyah: al-Leen wa al-Rifq* (Pakistan: Idaarah Tarjumaan al-Islaam, 1991), pp. 34-60.
[4] Abdul-Mushin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 128.
[5] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 128-129.
[6] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 90.

his harshness and apologized for it. On one occasion he wrote, "Do not let the harshness of these words overcome your thinking for Allah knows my intention behind them."[1]

Perhaps it was his overabundant love for the truth in the face of absolute refusal to listen that led him to harsh words. One has to realize what kind of people ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was dealing with. As noted while discussing *ijtihaad*, many times ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was dealing with people who would not even listen to the verses of the Quran or hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Thus, he once wrote, "One of the most amazing things that occurs from the leaders of the opponents is that when I clarify for them the words of Allah and what the scholars of *tafseer* state, they reply, 'It is not permissible for people like us or you to act according to the Quran, the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or the statements of the earlier scholars. We do not obey save what the later scholars said.'"[2] And even when ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would present statements from the later scholars, many times the opponent would not change his ways. When people behave in this fashion, it becomes permissible to use harsh terms and not allow the truth to be defeated or belittled simply due to their obstinate and wrong behavior. Thus, Allah says in the Quran,

وَلَا تُجَٰدِلُوٓاْ أَهۡلَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ إِلَّا بِٱلَّتِي هِيَ أَحۡسَنُ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ مِنۡهُمۡۖ

"And argue not with the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), unless it be in (a way) that is better, except with such of them as do wrong" (*al-Ankaboot* 46). Thus, at times one has to be harsh and this would include exposing the falsehood of people's arguments in the light of the Quran and Sunnah.

The next step, after all the above fails, is to threaten a person with some action if he does not change his ways. For some people, there is no response until one threatens their interests in some way. On occasion, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would threaten people that if they would not change their ways, he would give a ruling that the people should not pray behind them, should not accept their witness and they should oppose them.[3]

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 242.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 218.
[3] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 130.

Sooner or later, threats and mere words are no longer of any avail. If people see that that is the most that they are going to be threatened with, they will not change their ways. Hence, action of a positive and corrective manner is definitely needed. Indeed, it is directly pointed to in the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

من رأى منكُم منكَرا فَلْيغيره بِيده فَإِنْ لَم يستطع فَبِلسانِه فَإِنْ لَم يـستطع فَبِقَلْبِـه
وذَلك أضعف الإِيمان

"Whoever of you sees an evil must then change it with his hand. If he is not able to do so, then [he must change it] with his tongue. And if he is not able to do so, then [he must change it] with his heart. And that is the slightest [effect of] faith."[1] (Recorded by Muslim.)

Since *shirk* and disbelief are the greatest of all possible evils, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab used the means that Allah had given him to remove the actual sources of such *shirk*. In his abridged version of *Zaad al-Maad*, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab recounts some of the important points related to *masjid al-dharaar*, an "opposition mosque" set up by hypocrites during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to take people away from the Prophet's mosque. In the narration of ibn Hishaam, this mosque was demolished. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab then says that if such was the case with that mosque, "There is more of a right and obligation to do so with the sites of *shirk*. Similar should be done with bars, pubs and locations of evil."[2] In one of his letters, he also wrote, "It is not allowed for the places of *shirk* and false gods to remain even for one day if someone has the means to destroy them and bring them to an end… This is the ruling for the tombs built over the graves that are taken as idols worshipped besides Allah and the stones from which people seek blessings, make

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[1] Although it is not explicitly mentioned above, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also spoke about the importance of removing evil with "one's heart" if that is all within one's ability. In his letter to al-Suwaidi, he wrote, "I hope that Allah will honor you by helping His religion and His prophet according to what is in your ability, even if it just be by the heart and prayers. Verily, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said, 'If I order you to do something, do of it whatever is within your ability.' [Recorded by al-Bukhari.]" Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 37.

[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 6, p. 287.

vows, kiss [and so forth]. It is not allowed for any of them to remain on the face of the earth when one has the power to remove them."[1] Hence, when ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had the political authority to remove the domes and other sites of *shirk*, such as the dome over the grave of Zaid in al-Jubailah, he did so immediately, without fear of anyone except Allah.

The need to use "one's hand" in the removal of evil may even escalate to the point of using force to enjoin what is right, to bring about justice and put an end to crimes and immorality.[2] This next stage in ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's career is most noticeable after he moves from Huraimila to al-Uyainah and he has the support of the local authority, Uthmaan ibn Muammar. This is a very important point because one cannot take a physical step if it is going to produce more harm than good. Such would have been the case with the actions that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab carried out had he not had the backing of the people in power. Hence, in al-Uyainah, he went out to physically remove and destroy the mausoleums and tombs that the people prayed at and the trees and bushes that the people believed had powers and so forth. These popular sites had to be destroyed because they struck at the very heart of the concept of monotheism. However, they were also very popular among the people. One is only required and requested to make a move against them when one has the "ability to do so," as described in the above hadith. Meaning, again, that the expected good will outweigh any expected harm. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab kept this principle in mind and did not take these steps until it was clear that he was ready for them and that such were an obligation upon him given his new found support and ability.

Included in this category of "changing with one's hand" given the ability to do so is the enforcement of the Islamic legal punishments. Once again, this is something that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 73.

[2] It should be noted that sometimes one may resort to force and fighting while at the same time this does not mean that the opponent is considered a disbeliever. While discussing those Muslims who did not fulfill the four pillars of Islam (other than the testimony of faith), ibn Abdul-Wahhaab said, "As for the four pillars, if a person affirms them but does not adhere to them out of laziness, then, even though we fight him to get him to perform them, we do not declare him a disbeliever for not performing them. The scholars have differed concerning those who leave these deeds out of laziness while not denying [their obligation]." Quoted in Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 122.

fulfilled first in al-Uyainah when he had the power and the ability to do so according to the guidelines of the Shareeah. Of course, the most famous case at that time—much like it is becoming the most famous case today among those who believe in "freedom and licentiousness"—was the stoning of the adulterous woman who came to purify herself of the crime that she had committed.

A further aspect of ordering good and eradicating evil is what is known as jihad—the ultimate goal of which is truly nothing more than implementing the good and putting an end to evil. Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also moved up to this next level when the time was proper. Jihad and the taking or risking of lives is obviously not a light matter. It must be resorted to only when necessary and when the proper conditions are met. Although Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had been threatened and his life put at risk on a number of occasions, he never resorted to jihad until after moving to al-Diriyyah and entering into the pact with Muhammad ibn Saud. Even then, he only resorted to it when the enemies of his call left him no other option but to fight and defend this noble mission. He himself stated, "We have not fought anyone to this day save in defense of life and honor. We have fought against those who have come against us into our land and they do not leave us be."[1] Furthermore, he would never fight until "the proof was established against" a people, that is, only after the falsehood of ascribing partnres to Allah (*shirk*) was conveyed to them and yet they insisted on following *shirk* and refusing true monotheism (*tauheed*). Thus, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote after mentioning some idolatrous practices,

> These are the matters that have necessarily produced a conflict between us and the people. The matter got to the point with them that they declared us disbelievers, fought against us and declared our blood and wealth legal for them to spill, until Allah gave us support and victory over them. It is [*tauheed*] that we are calling the people to and fighting them over—after we establish the proof against them from the Book of Allah, Sunnah of His Messenger and the consensus of the Imams of the pious predecessors. [We do all that] in implementation of Allah's statement,
>
> وَقَٰتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ ٱلدِّينُ كُلُّهُۥ لِلَّهِ

[1] Quoted in Al-Uthaimeen, *Al-Shaikh*, p. 121.

> "And fight them until there is no more *fitnah* (disbelief and polytheism) and the religion (worship) will all be for Allah Alone [in the whole of the world]" (*al-Anfaal* 39).[1]

Such attacks on the person and teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab were "normal" given the moral condition of the people around him. They left ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, like the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) before him, with no peaceful option. Often times, one may expect this to be the case. Under such circumstances, without resorting to jihad, it is expected that the call and teachings would have come to an end. Thus, Allah says,

وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ ٱللَّهِ ٱلنَّاسَ بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لَّهُدِّمَتْ صَوَٰمِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَٰتٌ وَمَسَٰجِدُ يُذْكَرُ فِيهَا ٱسْمُ ٱللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ۗ وَلَيَنصُرَنَّ ٱللَّهُ مَن يَنصُرُهُۥٓ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَقَوِىٌّ عَزِيزٌ

"Had it not been that Allah checks one set of people by means of another, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, wherein the Name of Allah is mentioned much would surely have been pulled down. Verily, Allah will help those who help His (Cause). Truly, Allah is All-Strong, All-Mighty" (*al-Hajj* 40).

It must be noted, as al-Fauzaan stated in his refutation of one who criticized ibn Abdul-Wahhaab on this point, jihad, if it meets its proper conditions, cannot be considered a case of being harsh on the people or going to extremes. Al-Fauzaan states that in the same way that seeking political support was from the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), resorting to jihad when necessary was also from the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Again, if it is done within the limits set by the Shareeah, it should never be considered harshness or an act that should be criticized.[2]

According to ibn Bishr, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab took an active role with respect to jihad. In general, especially in the earlier years at al-Diriyyah, he was the one who prepared the troops and sent expeditions. He would advise the soldiers to have fear of Allah and to

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 114.

[2] Cf., Saalih al-Fauzaan, "*Taqeebaat ala ma Dhakarahu al-Ustaadh Abdul-Kareem al-Khateeb fi Kitaabihi al-Dawah al-Wahhaabiyyah wa Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab*" in [*Majallah*] *Kulliyah Usool al-Deen* (Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, Vol. 1, 1397-1398 A.H.), p. 86.

be resolute in their mission, expecting Allah’s help and bounty.[1] He would remind them to repent to Allah, always have a sincere intention and adhere to the faith, such being the keys to victory.[2] In fact, in victory or defeat, he was always the spiritual guide of the troops, reminding them of the reality of the situation that they were facing. After the great defeat at al-Haayir in 1178, in which five hundred of his followers were killed and many were taken prisoners, *Ameer* Abdul Azeez came directly to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and found the Shaikh telling him,

وَلَا تَهِنُوا۟ وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا۟ وَأَنتُمُ ٱلْأَعْلَوْنَ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ إِن يَمْسَسْكُمْ
قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ ٱلْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِّثْلُهُۥ ۚ وَتِلْكَ ٱلْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ
وَلِيَعْلَمَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنكُمْ شُهَدَآءَ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾
وَلِيُمَحِّصَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَيَمْحَقَ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ

“So do not become weak (against your enemy), nor be sad, and you will be superior (in victory) if you are indeed (true) believers. If a wound has touched you, be sure a similar wound has touched the others. And so are the days (good and not so good), We give to men by turns, that Allah may test those who believe, and that He may take martyrs from among you. And Allah likes not the wrongdoers. And that Allaah may test (or purify) the believers (from sins) and destroy the disbelievers” (*ali-Imraan* 139-141).[3]

Note that it was very clear by his behavior that the goal of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab’s jihad was never a matter of personal power, personal prestige or personal revenge. It seems—and only Allah knows the inner secrets—that it was truly for the sake of establishing the religion of Allah in its entirety. Thus, as ibn Ghannaam described, nothing would be more beloved to him than his enemy coming to him with excuses and asking for forgiveness. He never treated anyone in a harmful manner after being victorious over them, even if they had been harsh, punishing and mutilating in their treatment of the

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[1] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 165.
[2] Cf., ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 102.
[3] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 92.

followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[1] In this way, it seems that he was truly applying the command of Allah,

فَإِن تَابُوا۟ وَأَقَامُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتَوُا۟ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ فَإِخْوَٰنُكُمْ فِى ٱلدِّينِ

"But if they repent, perform the prayers and give the Zakaat, then they are your brethren in religion" (*al-Taubah* 11).

Issues of Priority

An important characteristic in ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's approach to *dawah* [propagating the faith] is giving priority to the more important issues. As is clear by now, the most important of all issues is the correct belief in Allah. He based this approach on the famous hadith recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim wherein the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sending Muaadh to Yemen as a teacher. He told Muaadh,

إنك تقْدم على قَومٍ أهل كتابٍ فَلْيكُن أولَ ما تدعوهم إلَيه عبادةُ الله فَإذَا عرفُـوا الله فَأخيِرهم أن الله قَد فَرض علَيهم خمس صلَوات في يومهم ولَيلَتهم..

"You are going to be coming upon a People of the Book. Let the first thing that you call them to be the worship of Allah. If they then recognize Allah, inform them that Allah has obligated upon them five prayers during their days and nights…" Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab commented, "Thus, a person is not to be asked to pray five times a day except after he knows true monotheism (*tauheed*) and he submits to it. [If that is the case with the prayer,] what should be the case with the secondary issues in which there is a difference of opinion?"[2] He also wrote,

> Know that the most important obligation upon the human is to recognize that Allah is the Lord of everything and its owner and He administers it according to His will. If you know that, then you must ponder over what are the rights of those attributes upon you—such as worship with love, esteem, awe, fear, hope and recognizing Him as the God, which encompasses humble

[1] See Nusair, p. 217.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 166.

submission to His commands and prohibitions. This comes before the obligations of prayers and zakat.[1]

While commenting on the verse,

وَلَقَدْ أُوحِىَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكَ لَئِنْ أَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلْخَـٰسِرِينَ

"And indeed it has been revealed to you, as it was to those before you: 'If you join others in worship with Allah, (then) surely (all) your deeds will be in vain, and you will certainly be among the losers'" (*al-Zumar* 65), ibn Abdul-Wahhaab noted, "This demonstrates the great need to learn about true monotheism. If the prophets were in need of that and eager to gain that knowledge, what about the others? This refutes the claim of the ignorant ones who believe that they know [*tauheed*] and are not in need of learning it."[2]

On numerous occasions, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab emphasized the importance of knowing the true foundations of Islam, which is its belief system. He repeatedly stressed the dangers of falling into polytheism (*shirk*) and the fact that Allah would not forgive such a sin.[3] Furthermore, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab delineated the actions that take one out of the fold of Islam. He stressed the importance of knowing these matters. In a letter to two of his students, he stated, "It is obligatory upon the man to teach this to his wife and members of his household—and this is a greater obligation than teaching the ablution and the prayer."[4] This is even more important than wrong acts related to wealth. He wrote about some of the *mutawwa*s who thought it was more important to talk to the people about wronging others with respect to their wealth than talking to them about the acts that completely negate their faith. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote,

> This is part of the great extent of their ignorance. They do not know anything but the wrongs related to wealth. As for the wrongs of *shirk*, they are ignorant. Allah has said, "Indeed, ascribing partners to Allah (*shirk*) is great injustice" (*Luqmaan* 13). What is the position of the wrong—by which if a person speaks it, or praises a

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 174.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 5, p. 345.
[3] Cf., Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 44 and p. 95.
[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 323.

> false god or defends it—that takes a person out of Islam, even if he fasts and prays, with respect to that wrong that does not take him out of Islam? [As for the latter,] either its person will meet its retribution or Allah will forgive him. There is a great difference between the two [types of wrong].[1]

Elsewhere he wrote, "Know, may Allah have mercy on you, that the obligation of knowing the testimony of 'there is none worthy of worship except Allah,' is before the obligation of prayers and fasting. It is obligatory upon the individual to study its meaning. That is more important than his studying about the prayers and fasting. The forbiddance of *shirk* and belief in false gods is greater than the forbiddance of marrying one's mothers and aunts."[2] In fact, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab refused to respond to some fiqh questions until he was certain that the one posing the question understood the concept of *tauheed* first, saying, in essence, that if one is not correctly following the concept of monotheism (*tauheed*), the other issues will not be of benefit.[3]

Furthermore, according to Saalih Aali-Shaikh, in his *dawah*, he clearly distinguished between the acts of *shirk* and the acts that are forbidden because they lead to *shirk*. The latter he would not speak about or repel until the concept of *shirk* was understood and the actual acts of *shirk* were stopped. Only after that, he would move on to speak about and stop the acts that are forbidden simply because they may lead to *shirk*, such as seeking a means to Allah by invoking in one's prayer the right of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or the status of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).[4]

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and the Qualities of the One Who Orders Good and Eradicates Evil

As is clear from the above, even given the great overall importance of ordering good and eradicating evil, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 190. See also vol. 7, p. 75 and p. 200.
[2] Abdul Rahmaan ibn Muhammad ibn Qaasim al-Najdi. *Al-Durar al-Saniyyah fi al-Ajwabah al-Najdiyyah* (Beirut: Daar al-Arabiyyah, 1982), vol. 2, p. 79.
[3] Cf., Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, 167.
[4] Saalih Aali-Shaikh, *Haadha Mafaaheemunaa* (1406 A.H.), pp. 90-91.

understood fully well that it is not something that is to be done in a haphazard manner nor is everyone qualified to fulfill this important role. There are certain principles that must be followed in the ordering of good and eradicating of evil. Similarly, there are certain qualities that are musts for the one who undertakes this important job.

Throughout ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings one can extract the most important qualities that he emphasized for the people who undertake this important role.[1] These qualities include, among others, the following:

(1) *Ikhlaas* or the quality of performing a deed purely and solely for Allah's sake: This is a quality that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stressed for all deeds. Indeed, he stated that one of the conditions for one's testimony of faith to be acceptable and pleasing to Allah is that one must make that testimony purely for the sake of Allah. While deriving points from the story of Adam and Iblis, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab noted that one point is the well-known point that any deed in which Allah's pleasure is not the goal is a vain and void deed.[2] In his letter to the Shareef of Makkah Ahmad ibn Saeed, during al-Husayyin's first delegation, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote, "It is obligatory upon everyone of us and you that he intends by his knowledge the pleasure of Allah."[3] This is particularly true for the one who is considering himself a worker for the sake of Allah—calling others to Islam, ordering good, eradicating evil, teaching and so forth. In contemporary times, this point is often forgotten as sincere Muslims get so involved in groups and organizations that they begin working and calling to their group or Shaikh rather than calling for the sake of Allah. In *Kitaab al-Tauheed*, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab alluded to this disease when, in the chapter on calling to the testimony of faith and while noting the importance of *ikhlaas*, he wrote, "Many are there who, even though they are calling to the truth, are actually calling to themselves."[4] In addition, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab warned his followers about anyone who may not be completely sincere in his actions and he advised them as to how to deal with them. In one of his letters, he stated, "If one of you fears that his brother may be acting with an evil

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[1] For more details, see Usrah, pp. 131-181.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 5, p. 93.
[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 312.
[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, p. 21.

intention, he should advise him with gentleness, advise him to be pure to the religion of Allah, advise him to leave acting for show and evil intent. He should not weaken his determination to strive for the sake of Allah. He also should not speak about him based on evil suspicion or attribute something to him that is not worthy."[1] (Usrah notes that intention is something hidden and known only to Allah. Thus, in this last quote, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab demonstrated the principle of how to deal with others. One cannot judge their intentions as such is known only to Allah.[2])

(2) Knowledge: Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab clearly viewed the lack of knowledge—or ignorance—as one of the main reasons why the Muslim Nation had reached the state it reached. Hence, he stressed the importance of attaining knowledge. As noted above, he stressed the importance of teaching everyone the foundations of the faith. However, when it came to the one who wishes to call to the faith of Allah or to order good and eradicate evil, he stressed that no one can do that properly unless his actions are based on true knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah. Perhaps this is something that he learned directly from his teacher in Madinah Abdullah ibn Ibraaheem ibn Saif who showed him his books and described them as the weapon that he had prepared for the people of Majmah. In fact, in one letter, he advised,

> Perhaps the enemies of *tauheed* have much knowledge, many books and proofs, as Allah says,
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> فَلَمَّا جَآءَتۡهُمۡ رُسُلُهُم بِٱلۡبَيِّنَٰتِ فَرِحُواْ بِمَا عِندَهُم مِّنَ ٱلۡعِلۡمِ
>
> "Then when their Messengers came to them with clear proofs, they were glad (and proud) with that which they had of the knowledge (of worldly things)" (*Ghaafir* 83). If you recognize that fact and if you recognize that the path to Allah must have enemies sitting upon it who are people of eloquence, knowledge and argumentation, as Allah says,
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> وَلَا تَقۡعُدُواْ بِكُلِّ صِرَٰطٖ تُوعِدُونَ وَتَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 289.
[2] Usrah, p. 140.

> “"And sit not on every road, threatening, and hindering from the Path of Allah” (*al-Araaf* 86),[1] then it is obligatory upon you to learn of the religion of Allah what will become weapons for you by which you may fight those devils.[2]

At the same time, though, he also understood that if one relies upon the revelation from Allah, one cannot truly be defeated by any kind of argument. Hence, one simply has to study the truth and then present it without any fear. Thus he wrote, “But if you turn to Allah and submit to the arguments of Allah and their exposition, then you should not fear or grieve. Verily, the plot of Satan is weak. A commoner from the true monotheists can overcome one thousand of the scholars of those polytheists, as Allah has said, ‘Verily, our troops are those who will overcome’ (*al-Saaffaat* 173). The soldiers of Allah overcome others through proofs and speech in the same way that they overcome them with swords…”[3]

In reality, the ignorant person who pretends to order good or eradicate evil may cause much greater harm than good. Hence, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab insisted upon and greatly stressed the condition of knowledge. For example, he wrote, “It is not allowed for a person to object to an act until he has knowledge. The first step in repelling an act is your knowledge that said act contradicts the command of Allah.”[4] In his letter to the *mutawwa*s of al-Diriyyah, he explained to them, “When the issue is not clear to you, it is not allowed for you to object to anyone who has made a ruling or done an act until his mistake becomes clear to you. Otherwise, you must remain silent and not act. If you verify that a mistake has been made, then you should explain it to them.”[5]

Of course, in taking this position concerning knowledge, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab is following the great scholars who came before

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[1] The entire verse is, “And sit not on every road, breathing threats, hindering from the path of Allah those who believe in Him, and seeking in it something crooked; but remember how you were little, and He gave you increase. And hold in your mind's eye what was the end of those who did mischief.”
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab , *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 156.
[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 156. Also see vol. 1, p. 159.
[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 284.
[5] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 240.

him.[1] Hence, when trying to solve a dispute among some of his brethren from Hautah of Sudair, he wrote, “The people of knowledge say that the one who orders good and eradicates evil is in need of three characteristics: (1) He must know about what he is ordering or what he is eradicating; (2) He must be gentle in what he is ordering or what he is eradicating; and (3) he must have patience in the face of the harm that will come. You people are in need of truly learning that and acting by it for shortcomings in the person of religion are only the outcome of lack of acting according to these principles or lack of understanding them.”[2]

(3) *Hikmah*[3]: With respect to ordering good and eradicating evil, *hikmah* (“wisdom”) implies knowing what approach to use at the appropriate time. For example, one must understand when gentleness as opposed to harshness is required or when a tougher stance is justified and so on. Mention has already been made of how ibn Abdul-Wahhaab availed himself of virtually every form of persuasion and argumentation—from soft speech to jihad. He also taught his followers that they must know the proper manner in which to eradicate evil. Thus, he once wrote, “Some of the people of religion eradicate an evil—and they are correct in that—but they are mistaken in their harshness in the matter that it leads to division among the brethren.”[4]

Of course, *hikmah* also implies understanding what are the most important topics to tackle. This point was discussed above, showing that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab handled the most important topics first (belief about Allah, *shirk*) and then moved on to the next important topics, according to the situation of the people.

In addition to discussing the above characteristics, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also delineated some very important principles related to

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[1] For example, Sufyaan al-Thauri and ibn Taimiyyah stated these upcoming principles. See Usrah, pp. 144-145.

[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, vol. 13, p. 125.

[3] *Hikmah* can be defined in many ways. Unfortunately, many people misunderstand *hikmah* simply to mean “wisdom,” almost to the point of being clever in one’s dealings with others. However, the earliest Muslim scholars defined it as an understanding—an understanding of the Quran, Sunnah and basic knowledge—such that one knows how to apply the teachings properly under different circumstances.

[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 296.

ordering good and eradicating evil.[1] These principles include the following:

(1) Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stressed that the evil that is to be removed must be something confirmed and apparent. Thus he wrote to Muhammad ibn Suwailim and Thuniyaan ibn Saud, "Inform them about two matters. First, they should not be hasty and they should not speak without verifying matters, for there is much falsification [and lying today]. Secondly, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) knew the individual hypocrites yet he accepted their outward acts and he left their inward secrets to Allah. If something apparent appears from them concerning which they should be fought, only then fight them."[2] In other words, an evil needs to be seen, heard or reported from trustworthy witnesses. One does not act simply on conjecture nor does one make assumptions about others' intentions. In this approach, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was following very closely the instructions of Imam Ahmad.[3]

(2) Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also alluded to the principle that it is not permissible to remove an evil if the removal of that evil should lead to a greater harm. Thus he wrote, "The scholars mention that if objecting to an evil is a cause for division, then it is not allowed to object to it. By Allah, you must act on this principle and understand it as otherwise your objecting to evil may actually be harmful to the religion."[4] Elsewhere, he stated the important principle that one may have to allow a lesser evil to avoid a greater evil or sacrifice a lesser good to obtain a greater good.[5] On this point, it seems that he was inspired by ibn Taimiyyah and ibn al-Qayyim who stressed this principle in a number of their writings.[6] Thus, one also finds ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stressing that rulers should be admonished and advised privately, not publicly, and that they should be obeyed in all that they order that is consistent with the Shareeah. These principles are related to the overriding principle of accepting a lesser harm to avoid a greater harm.[7]

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[1] For more details, see Usrah, pp. 182-209.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 284.
[3] See Usrah, pp. 183-184.
[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 296.
[5] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 5, p. 23.
[6] Cf., Usrah, pp. 189-191.
[7] Cf., Usrah, pp. 192-199.

(3) A third important principle is that one should not object to another's action that is based on a permissible *ijtihaad* or juristic reasoning. Hence, he rebuked those who objected to kissing a scholar's hand. He said that such should not be objected to because the scholars have differed on that and it is even related that Zaid ibn Thaabit kissed ibn Abbas' hand and said, "This is how we have been ordered to treat the members of the Prophet's household."[1] However, this does not apply to every issue in which there is a difference of opinion. One needs to distinguish between rulings that are based on clear and definitive texts, not open to various opinions, and those rulings that are based on non-definitive texts that are open to various understandings. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab explicitly mentioned this point in a number of his letters and legal *responsa*, writing: "If the issue is one of *ijtihaad*, then you know that there is no objecting in a matter of *ijtihaad*. Whoever behaves according to his school in what is under his authority is not to be objected to."[2] In the following passage, he gave more details as to the exact meaning of this concept,

> [The question of] there being no objecting in a matter of *ijtihaad*... If the one who makes this statement means every issue in which there is a difference of opinion, then the statement is false and contradicts the consensus of the Nation. The Companions and those who came afterwards continued to object to those with differing opinions or those who were mistaken, whoever they were, even if they were the most knowledgeable or most pious of the people. Allah sent Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with guidance and the religion of truth and He ordered us to obey him and abandon what contradicts his teachings. This includes pointing out to the scholar a mistake he made when contradicting the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and objecting to his opinion. If the one who made that statement [about not objecting in matters of *ijtihaad*] is referring to issues of *ijtihaad* in which there are differences of opinion for which the correct view is not made clear, then the statement is correct. It is not allowed for a person to object to something simply because it differs from his opinion or the customs of the people. Similarly, it is not allowed for a person to order something except

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 284.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 41.

based on knowledge, and one may not object to something except based on knowledge.[1]

The Comprehensiveness of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's Approach to Ordering Good and Eradicating Evil

The religion of Islam is often called "a complete way of life." This is because its teachings touch upon every aspect of life. In other words, God has revealed a book and sent a living prophet to set the example and give the guidance for all of the different phases and compartment of life. Thus, whenever there is guidance on a matter, refusal to follow that guidance or rejection of that guidance is tantamount to an evil. This evil should be corrected and changed according to the principles described above. Thus, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) taught and guided people concerning maters of belief, worship, manners, character, morals and so forth.

A very important aspect of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's life and teachings is that he did not confine himself to changing simply one portion of life or society. Many are the leaders or movements that may stress one aspect—such as worship—while being neglectful of the many other important aspects of life. Such attempts at reform may bring about positive results but such results are most likely doomed to be very partial when looked at in the greater picture. Thus, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, like the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself, did not restrict himself to any one aspect of Islam. Instead, he sought to change the entire edifice of society, from the individual and his behavior to the government and what principles it is guided by.

It is well-beyond the scope of this work to detail the different arenas in which ibn Abdul-Wahhaab eradicated evil and brought about positive results. Actually, many of them have been touched upon in this and the previous chapter. At least a brief outline of the different aspects of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's reform, his ordering good and eradicating evil, his changing of society, is warranted.[2]

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 4, section on *Fataawa*, pp. 33-34.

[2] For more details concerning each topic listed below, see Usrah, pp. 229-405.

(1) The realm of *aqeedah* ("beliefs"): If one wanted to summarize the most import aspect of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's struggle it could be termed the struggle to correct the beliefs and consequent practice of the concept of *tauheed al-uloohiyyah* (the oneness of Godhood). Stating his essential mission, he once wrote,

> As for what we prohibit the people from, we prohibit them from the *shirk* about which Allah has said,
>
> إِنَّهُۥ مَن يُشْرِكْ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ ٱلْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَىٰهُ ٱلنَّارُ
>
> "Verily, whosoever sets up partners in worship with Allah, then Allah has forbidden Paradise for him, and the Fire will be his abode" (*al-Maaidah* 72). And about which Allah said to His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), in the way of stern warning as he and his brethren [prophets] are free of any *shirk*,
>
> وَلَقَدْ أُوحِىَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكَ لَئِنْ أَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلْخَٰسِرِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾ بَلِ ٱللَّهَ فَٱعْبُدْ وَكُن مِّنَ ٱلشَّٰكِرِينَ
>
> "And indeed it has been revealed to you as it was to those before you: 'If you join others in worship with Allaah, (then) surely (all) your deeds will be in vain, and you will certainly be among the losers.' Nay! But worship Allah (Alone and none else), and be among the grateful" (*al-Zumar* 65-66).[1]

In addition to correcting the beliefs about *tauheed al-uloohiyyah*, he also corrected beliefs related to *tauheed al-asmaa wa al-sifaat* (the uniqueness of the names and attributes of Allah)[2] and *tauheed al-ruboobiyyah* (the oneness of Lordship).

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also physically removed and logically explained the falsehood of the idols and other objects of worship besides Allah. Of course, the physical removal of the idols came only after he had the political authority and strength to do so. However, this

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 95.

[2] In particular, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab recommended that one refrain from reading the books of the theologians and *ahl al-Kalaam*, following the suggestions of the earlier scholars. Instead, he said, one should get one's beliefs from the books of the early scholars whose works are filled with texts from the Quran and Sunnah. See Usrah, pp. 265-268.

move in itself was of great importance. After removing those false objects of worship, no harm came to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab whatsoever. This made some of the Bedouin tribes realize the ignorance of their ways and the powerlessness of their objects of worship. It also added to his esteem and reputation for miles around. Furthermore, it physically removed those sites such that later generations could not revive such false worship. Thus, to this day in Najd, one finds no graves or trees being set off as mausoleums, "holy sites" and places of worship although before ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's time the land was filled with such sites. In doing thus, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab followed the example of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who destroyed the idols at the Kaabah and who sent Ali to demolish the tombs over the graves.[1]

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also refuted the false beliefs of different heretical groups, such as the Shiites. He noted that the early scholars considered heresies much more harmful than the great sins and they believed that heresies lead to disbelief.[2] In general, the Sunnah and heresies cannot both exist at the same time. If one has one, he is not going to have the other. Thus, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stated, "Ordering the implementation of the Sunnah and forbidding heresies is part of ordering good and eradicating evil and is from the most virtuous of righteous deeds."[3] Among the innovations that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab worked to remove was the building of domes over graves, the gatherings for the Prophet's birthday and the innovation of Sufi orders who claim a way of pleasing Allah that is not consistent with the Sunnah.[4]

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[1] It is also narrated that the rightly-guided caliph Umar ibn al-Khattaab had the tree under which the pledge was given to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) cut down when he heard that people were visiting it as a special place. However, other narrations state the Allah took the knowledge away from the Companions and that later they could not recognize which tree it really was. Allah knows best. See Usrah, pp. 279-281.

[2] See Usrah, pp. 309-310.

[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 13, p. 125. See also vol. 7, p. 85.

[4] In referring to what are common Sufi beliefs, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote, "If a person believes that anyone has a path to Allah other than following Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or that it is not obligatory to follow him or if someone claims that he is in need of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) only for exoteric knowledge but not esoteric knowledge or for the knowledge of the Shareeah as opposed to the

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also corrected the people's views concerning loyalty and disassociation—he noted what a central place this concept has in the faith of a Muslim. Finally, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also spoke about and objected to the widespread practices of sorcery, fortune-telling and astrology. He also corrected the people's views concerning amulets and charms. His book *Kitaab al-Tauheed* has chapters dedicated to each of these topics.

(2) The realm of *ibadaat* ("the ritual acts of worship"): A religious leader among Muslims seeks to spread the faith—this implies both the beliefs and practices. The most basic facets of the religion of Islam are the ritual acts of worship. These are not optional matters, such that a person, for example, prays if and when he wants to pray. Instead, they are practices that form the foundation of the society and are actually performed in a communal fashion. It is these practices that lay the groundwork for everything else that Islam seeks to implement in society. This important fact was not lost upon ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Hence, ensuring that people were praying, fasting, giving the zakat and so on was definitely part of his overall understanding of ordering good and eradicating evil. Thus, for example, in al-Uyainah he made sure that people performed their prayers in congregation in the mosque. He wrote, "I require those under my authority to establish the prayer, give the zakat and perform other deeds Allah has made obligatory."[1] He also wrote, "I call people to establish the prayer in congregation in the proper way, to give the zakat, to fast Ramadhan and to make the pilgrimage to the Inviolable House of Allah. And we order good and eradicate evil just as Allah has said,

ٱلَّذِينَ إِن مَّكَّنَّـٰهُمْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتَوُا۟ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَأَمَرُوا۟ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا۟ عَنِ ٱلْمُنكَرِ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ عَـٰقِبَةُ ٱلْأُمُورِ

'Those who, if We give them power in the land, (they) order for the establishment of the prayers, to pay the Zakaat and they enjoin what is

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knowledge of the reality or says that some scholars are allowed to leave his Shareeah like Khidhr left the Shareeah of Moses, then, for any of these beliefs, he has committed disbelief." Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 68.

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 36.

good and forbid what is evil. And with Allaah rests the end of (all) matters (of creatures)' (*al-Hajj* 41)."[1] Indeed, he stated, "We shall fight against those who abandon the prayers and those who refuse to give the zakat just like the truthful one of the Nation, Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq, fought those who refused to give zakat."[2]

In addition to seeing that his followers performed the acts of worship, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also strove to eradicate the heretical aspects that had crept into the acts of worship. He followed the view—strongly supported by the clear hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)—that every innovation is an act of misguidance and is wrong. Thus, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab objected to the practice of making an extra call to prayer, the caller to prayer making prayers upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) aloud after the call to prayer and similar other acts.[3]

(3) The realm of *muamalaat* ("business and worldly interactions"): Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab objected to the evil practice of leaving endowments for the purpose of preventing some rightful heirs, particularly the females, from receiving their due shares. Although religious endowments as a whole are something sanctioned in the Shareeah, there are some basic principles that must be abided by. In particular, there is a difference of opinion as to whether it is allowed to leave an endowment benefiting some of one's children and not the others, especially if the former children are not in a state of need. When doing so, one lessens the inheritance and future income of those children who do not receive funds from the endowment.[4] However, during ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's time, the act of leaving endowments was done in such a way that it was clear that the intention behind it was

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 114.

[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 98. As quoted earlier, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also wrote, "The pillars of Islam are five. The first of them are the two statements testifying to the faith. Then come the [remaining] four pillars. If one affirms them but does not perform them out of laziness, we, even if we should fight him over what he has done, do not declare him a disbeliever for leaving those acts. The scholars have differed over the disbelief of one who abandons those acts out of laziness, without rejecting them [as obligations]. And we do not declare anyone a disbeliever save based on what all the scholars agree upon, and that is the two testimonies of faith." Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 4, section of *Fataawa*, p. 9.

[3] Cf., Usrah, pp. 350-351.

[4] For more details, see Usrah, pp. 355-357.

not sound: it was meant to prevent the females from getting their rightful share of the inheritance. Hence, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab struggled against this evil practice. On this point ibn Abdul-Wahhaab once again met with opposition, especially since this practice was sanctioned by some of the scholars in his area. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote a small treatise and a lengthy letter explaining his position and arguments against the prevailing evil practice.[1] He stated that although some scholars may lend their support to this practice, it is, in fact, as he said, "One of the most heinous of all evils and greatest of the great sins to change the law of Allah and His religion and to seek some loophole by claiming that such an act is a way to get closer to Allah. This is exactly what these endowments that we have do when the person is trying to prevent the one whom Allah has given a portion to [from their rightful portion], be it the wife…"[2]

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also fought against different forms of *riba* ("interest, usury").[3] He also objected to the practice of giving judges presents, which were no less than bribes in his opinion.[4] This, in fact, may have been the issue that caused him the greatest tension between him and his father. Finally, he objected to and brought an end to the wrongful, un-Islamic taxes and tolls that people were forced to pay, replacing them with the just zakah and other forms of lawful revenue for the state.[5] On this point, one can recall his pact with Muhammad ibn Saud in which ibn Abdul-Wahhaab refused to agree to the ibn Saud's second condition of continuing his taxes that he leveled on the people.

(4) The realm of *hudood* ("Islamic penal punishments"): In this arena, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab reinstituted the punishment for illegal sexual intercourse—a punishment which had become quite strange and unusual for Muslims. He also, of course, revived the concept of jihad and fighting, not for wealth and power, but to properly implement Islamic beliefs and law.

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[1] For more details, see Usrah, pp. 357-367. For ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's letter on this issue, see Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, pp. 78-85.

[2] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, pp. 78-79.

[3] See Usrah, pp. 368-369.

[4] See Usrah, pp. 370-377.

[5] See Usrah, pp. 378-380.

(5) The realm of manners and behavior: In this realm, one finds ibn Abdul-Wahhaab correcting the behavior of the people with respect to the descendents of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).[1] One also finds ibn Abdul-Wahhaab dealing with the issue of singing and music in contradiction with the guidelines of the Shareeah.[2]

Summary

In sum, one can see that the salient and "revivalist" teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab were truly not more than a return to the pure and unadulterated teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. However, of course, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab highlighted those matters that needed the greatest attention given his time and environment. He started with the most important issue: freeing one's worship from the filth of *shirk*. However, he did not stress that issue at the expense of all other issues. Indeed, he was not uni-dimensional in any way. His call and teachings encompassed education, politics, preaching, ordering good, eradicating evil and jihad. These are salient aspects that one finds in the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself. In addition, he opened the door to ijtihaad and proper thinking about religious issues. He turned people's attentions to the Quran and Sunnah, the real roots of Islamic learning. By doing so, he once again opened the door for Muslims to truly enter into Islam completely, rather than following other ways that lead away from the Straight Path. Indeed, if one wanted to attempt to sum up his reform and revivalist efforts, one can turn to Allah's words in the Quran,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱدۡخُلُواْ فِي ٱلسِّلۡمِ كَآفَّةٗ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُواْ خُطُوَٰتِ ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنِۚ إِنَّهُۥ لَكُمۡ عَدُوّٞ مُّبِينٞ

"O you who believe! Enter perfectly in Islam (by obeying all the rules and regulations of the Islaamic religion) and follow not the footsteps of Satan. Verily! He is to you a plain enemy" (*al-Baqarah* 208).

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[1] See Usrah, pp. 297-402.
[2] See Usrah, pp. 403-405.

IV
The Legacy and Influence of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab

The Writings of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab[1]

Before discussing his writings, it must be noted that when it came to spreading his message, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab used virtually all of the means of media and communication available to him at his time. This included Friday sermons, speeches, lessons, writing books, writing letters and epistles, sending instructors to other lands and so forth. Thus, he certainly did not concentrate upon writing. Indeed, his real scholarship is probably not even best demonstrated in what can be called his "books" or "pamphlets." His true scholarship is best found in his numerous letters and epistles that he sent out to supporter and foe alike.[2]

[1] Perhaps the most detailed discussion of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings, including a discussion of works mentioned by earlier scholars and since then possibly lost, is al-Abood, vol. 1, pp. 191-235.

[2] Thus it is that these letters have been published as a separate volume (volume 7 with 323 pages) in the collected works of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Some of his letters are even longer than some of his smaller "booklets". Furthermore, Abdul Muhsin ibn Uthmaan ibn Baaz completed a two-volume master's thesis on Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's letters (their style, content, effect, influence and so forth). See Abdul Muhsin ibn Uthmaan ibn Baaz, *Rasaail al-Imaam Muhammad ibn Abdil Wahhaab al-Shakhsiyyah: Diraasah Daawiyyah* (Riyadh: Daar Ishbeeliyah, 2000). Ibn Baaz (vol. 1, p. 8) notes that writing letters was also a very effective tool of propagating and teaching the faith as used by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his early successors. It should also be noted that ibn Baaz (vol. 1, p. 21) concludes that letter number seventeen in the collection, entitled, "Letter to the People of the Maghrib [Northwest Africa]," was not written by Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Most likely it was written by Abdullah, the son of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, in the year 1218 A.H. Abdullah al-Uthaimeen ("*Rasaail*," vol. 1, pp. 93-97) also doubts three of the letters (nos. 7, 16 to Abdullah al-Sanaani and 25). However, his reasoning is not very strong. His conclusion is rejected by ibn Baaz (vol. 2, pp. 787-791). On the other hand, al-Abbood affirms all of the letters and even refutes the argument that the letter to the People of the Maghrib was not from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. See al-Abbood, vol. 1, pp. 225-231. In any case, this research shows some of the detail

Indeed, as Abdul Muhsin ibn Baaz notes, these letters demonstrate that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was not simply a true scholar but he was also a wise propagator of the faith. He understood people's personalities and levels of understanding. He was able to communicate with them in ways that were appropriate and convincing for them, whether they be scholars, in which case his letters would be replete with legal proofs, or laymen, in which case Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would even resort to colloquial speech.[1]

Furthermore, it can also be said that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab spent most of his time in the practical aspects of spreading the faith. He was teaching, advising, making jihad, making decisions for a newly found state, ordering the good and forbidding the evil. That kind of activity definitely was his greatest concern. At the same time, though, that did not prevent him from doing a good deal of writing, especially in the fields of *aqeedah, fiqh, hadith* and *tauheed*.

His writing style is simple and clear, relying mostly on the Quran and hadith. He avoids "philosophical discussions" (which are, in any case, usually distant from the tone of the Quran as well as more confusing and harmful than they are beneficial).[2] However, his style would change depending on the type or purpose of work that he was writing (for example, a work on Islamic jurisprudence as opposed to a work on matters of faith).[3] In general, he would always use proper and excellent Arabic, unless his work was destined for a particular sector

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that the scholars have gone through to determine ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's exact writings. This is an important point that will be touched upon later: the writings and teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab are, to a very great extent, well-known, authenticated and recorded. What he taught and what he said is not a mystery.

[1] Cf., Abdul Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 8. Al-Ajilaani also noted that since so much of his time was spent in teaching and implementing the faith, he did not have the time to write lengthy works and many of his works were, thus, abridgements of other works. See Nusair, p. 93.

[2] One can say that he was "free" of the damaging influence of foreign philosophies, such as Greek philosophy, that often cloud the minds of Muslim writers even when they set about returning to the Quran and Sunnah. His writings are also free of the special terminology of the Sufis. Cf., al-Nadwi, pp. 163-4.

[3] A comparison between two of his works available in English (*Kitaab al-Tauheed* and *Kashf al-Shubuhaat*) reflects two of his different styles.

of people wherein, as just stated, he would use their own colloquial language.

Given all the above, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab did leave behind more than a small amount of writings. Below is a review of some of his more important works:

Works on *Aqeedah* or Islamic Beliefs

There is no question that the most important of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's works are related to the concept of *aqeedah*. This was his first and primary concern (however, this does not mean that he ever neglected the other important topics such as fiqh, as shall be seen below). Among the important works he wrote on *aqeedah* are the following:

(i) *Kitaab al-Tauheed alladhi Huwa Haqq Allah ala al-Abeed* ("The Book of Tauheed which is Allah's Right Upon the Servants")[1]: According to his grandson Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Hasan, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote this book while in Basra. However, according to ibn Ghannaam, he wrote it while in Huraimila, after returning from his travels.[2] In either case, it is agreed upon that this was his first work. Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself taught and explained this work to a large number of students. Indeed, from the actual brevity of the work itself (for example, many times verses of the Quran would not be quoted in their entirety), it seems that it was meant first and foremost to be taught. However, his excellent way of summarizing the most important topics related to the Oneness of God and his selections of Quranic verses and hadith point to the author's depth of knowledge in this field.[3] Al-Husain notes that the style of this book in itself is an

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[1] This work has been published numerous times on its own and may also be found in numerous anthologies, such as *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, pp. 7-151.

[2] Cf., al-Uthaimeen, *al-Shaikh*, p. 74; Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 82.

[3] In Arabic, numerous commentaries have been written on this book, including *Taiseer al-Azeez al-Hameed* by Sulaimaan ibn Abdullah, *Ibtaal al-Tandeed* by ibn Ateeq, *Fath al-Majeed* by Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Hasan and *al-Qaul al-Sadeed* by al-Saadi. Muhamamd ibn Saalih al-Uthaimeen also has a three-volume commentary on this work, *Al-Qaul al-Mufeed ala Kitaab al-Tauheed*. Translations include the original translation by Ismail al-Faruqi, translated many years ago and published by many companies. More recently, a new translation from Darussalam in Riyadh came out in 1996. The very important commentary by Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's grandson Abdul-Rahmaan

indication of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's main teaching: the importance of returning to the simplicity and purity of Islam as given in its clear revelation. This work is a clear call to all Muslims to purify their thoughts about Allah and religion by freeing them from the later theological, philosophical and mystical deviations that have crept into the religion.[1]

In this work, Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab truly attacked the deviations and polytheistic practices that he witnessed in Najd and outside of Najd. A cursory look at some of the sixty-seven chapter titles gives a good picture of what this book is all about: "Virtues of *Tauhid*[2] and the many Sins for which it Atones," "Theurgy, Talismans and Bewitchment," "On Conjuring a Tree or a Stone," "On Slaughtering for other than Allah's sake," "To Seek Refuge in other than Allah is *Shirk*[3]," "The Cause of Unbelief is Exaggeration of the Worth of the Righteous," "Protection of *Tauhid* by the Prophet and His Blocking All Roads to *Shirk*," "On Soothsayers and their likes," "On Taking Allah, the Quran or the Prophet in jest," and so forth.[4]

(ii) *Kashf al-Shubuhaat* ("Clarification of Misunderstandings")[5]: This is a fairly short work of a polemic nature,

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ibn Hasan, *Fath al-Majeed*, has been translated as *Divine Triumph: Explanatory Notes on the Book of Tawheed* (Ali as-Sayed al-Halawani, trans., El-Mansourah, Egypt: Dar al-Manarah, 2002). Sameh Strauch also translated and commented upon the book in an original work [Sameh Strauch, *Kitab at-Tawheed Explained* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2000]. Unfortunately, in Strauch's work there is nothing distinguishing ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's original from the commentary. Finally, among the works related to *Kitaab al-Tauheed* is Saalih ibn Abdullah al-Usaimi, *Al-Durr al-Nadheed fi Takhreej Kitaab al-Tauheed* (Daar ibn Khuzaimah, 1413 A.H.). This last work is a detailed discussion of the hadith used by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in this important work. There are a few hadith in ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's work that, although graded acceptable by earlier scholars, on closer inspection do seem to be weak. See al-Usaimi's introduction, pp. 11-13.

[1] Al-Husain, p. 87.

[2] *Tauhid* is the belief in the oneness of God or monotheism.

[3] *Shirk* is the association of partners with God.

[4] Cf., Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, *Kitab al-Tawhid* (Ismail al-Faruqi, trans., Al-Ain, United Arab Emirates: Zayed Welfare Centre for the New Muslims, n.d.), pp. viii-xiv.

[5] This short work has also been published numerous times. It may be found in Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, pp. 153-181. A translation of this work is available in Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab, *Three Essays on Tawhid* (Ismail Al Faruqi, trans. North American Trust Publications, 1979),

much different in style from *Kitaab al-Tauheed*. However, in its argumentation it is very powerful in refuting the false claims of those who attempted to refute the teachings of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Al-Nadwi calls this work a sort of "completion" of *Kitaab al-Tauheed*.[1] Although it is not known exactly when ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote this work, it is apparent that he wrote it after some refutations of his teachings began to appear, probably while in al-Uyainah or shortly after moving to al-Diriyyah.[2]

In this work, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab makes the point that *tauheed al-ibaadah* or the oneness of worship, meaning the worship of Allah alone, was the essence of the dispute between the messengers and those who refuse to follow and obey them. He shows from unequivocal evidence directly from the Quran that the polytheists of the Arabs believed in Allah as the "Supreme Being" yet they refused to give up praying to others and seeking the intercession of others. Among the important statements that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab makes in this work is, "Monotheism (*tauheed*) must be with the heart, tongue and deeds. If any of those are not fulfilled, the person is not a Muslim."[3]

(iii) *Mufeed al-Mustafeed fi Kufr Taarik al-Tauheed*[4]: This work was written by Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in 1167. It was written as a rebuttal of Muhammad's own brother Sulaimaan's *Fasl al-Khitaab fi al-Radd ala Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab*. The main issue that Sulaimaan wrote about was the question of declaring a person—a Muslim—to be a non-Muslim. The purport of Sulaimaan's work was to show that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's views on these issues differed from those of ibn Taimiyyah. In this work, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab shows that his thoughts are consistent with the thoughts of ibn Taimiyyah. He also states that even if ibn Taimiyyah should make a mistake on such an issue, one is still obliged to follow what can be shown directly from the Quran and Sunnah. Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab goes further to show that

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pp. 25-40. A commentary by Muhammad ibn Saalih al-Uthaimeen, *al-Taleeqaat ala Kashf al-Shuhuhaat*, has recently been published.

[1] Al-Nadwi, p. 168.

[2] Cf., al-Uthaimeen, *al-Shaikh*, p. 77.

[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, p. 189.

[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, pp. 279-329.

scholars other than ibn Taimiyyah were in complete agreement with his arguments. He finally discusses the fact that many people tried to defend polytheistic acts among the Muslims while, in fact, there is no justification for their rationalizations.

(iv) *Al-Usool al-Thalaathah wa Adillatuhaa* ("The Three Principles and Their Evidence")[1]: It is said that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote this work at the request of *Ameer* Abdul-Azeez who had asked him for a concise work that could be taught to all the people.[2] In this poignant work, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab explains how every Muslim must know his Lord, his *deen* ("religion") and his prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He began this work with two introductory sections, the first about the importance of knowledge, acting upon it, calling others to it and being patient when doing so and the second about the wisdom behind the creation of humans. It was Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's goal that people would memorize this work, so he wrote it in a very simple fashion. Indeed, the followers taught this work in the mosque and after the Fajr prayer would have people recite it from their memories.[3]

(v) *Al-Qawaaid al-Arbaah* ("The Four Principles")[4]: In this work, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab establishes four basic principles: (1) The people whom the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) fought accepted the concept of the oneness of the Lord and Creator, yet that was not sufficient to make them Muslims. (2) Those polytheists claimed that their intercessors and false gods were simply means of getting closer to Allah. (3) The Messenger

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, pp. 183-196. An English translation is available in Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab, *Three Essays on Tawhid* (Ismail Al Faruqi, trans. North American Trust Publications, 1979), pp. 12-21. A number of commentaries have been written on it, including: *Haashiyah Thalaathat al-Usool* by Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Muhammad ibn Qaasim al-Najdi and *Sharh Thalaathat al-Usool* by Muhammad ibn Saalih al-Uthaimeen. The former work has been translated into English as *Notes to the Three Tenets* (Farid Abdulwahid Haibatan, trans., Jeddah: Dar al-Khair, 2001) while the latter has been translated as *Explanation of the Three Fundamental Principles of Islam* (Dawood Burbank, trans. Birmingham, United Kingdom: Al-Hidaayah Publishing and Distribution, 1997).

[2] Al-Abood, vol. 2, p. 184.

[3] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 90.

[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, pp. 197-202. An English translation is available in Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab, *Three Essays on Tawhid* (Ismail Al Faruqi, trans. North American Trust Publications, 1979), pp. 22-24.

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) dealt with all of those polytheists in the same way, regardless of whether they worshipped angels, the Prophet Jesus or whatever. (4) The polytheists of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's time were even worse in error because earlier polytheists would make their worship pure during times of distress while the contemporary polytheists would associate partners with Allah during both times of ease as well as distress.

(vi) *Sharh Sittah Mawaadhi min al-Seerah* ("Commentary on Six Situations of the Life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)")[1]: In this work, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab provides the reader with the difference between the religion of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the religion of the polytheists. He states that many followers of Islam do not truly understand these points. The six aspects of the Prophet's life that he touches upon are the following: (1) The first verses of the Quran were directed against the polytheists. This demonstrates that this issue of belief is the most important issue. (2) The polytheists did not fight the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) until he clearly demonstrated the falseness of their faith. This shows that a Muslim's faith cannot be complete until he declares his opposition to polytheistic acts. (3) Satan made the people believe that there was room to compromise with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). However, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) rejected any such compromise with the enemies of true monotheism. (4) Allah blamed the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for seeking forgiveness for Abu Taalib. Although Abu Taalib recognized the truth of Islam and defended the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), he failed to ever reject the faith of the polytheists. (5) Allah criticized those people who did not migrate from Makkah although they had the means to do so. They did not migrate due to their love for their relatives, wealth or homeland. This demonstrates that true faith must be followed up by actions; otherwise, it is a weak or untrue faith. (6) Finally, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab presents the story of those who apostatized after the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Noble Companions did not make any

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, pp. 353-362.

distinction between them, showing that one who makes the profession of faith can still be considered a disbeliever if he negates his Islam.

(vii) *Masaail al-Jaahiliyyah* ("The Issues of the Era of Ignorance")[1]: In this work, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab lists 129 issues in which Islam differs from and rejects the ways of Ignorance. Many of the issues he mentioned, the Muslims had fallen back into performing, such as taking graves of prophets as places of worship.[2]

(viii) *Risaalah fi al-Radd ala al-Raafidhah* ("Treatise on Refuting the Raafidhah (Shiah)")[3]: In this work, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab deals with a number of beliefs and fiqh positions of the Shiah that clearly contradict the Quran, Sunnah and understanding of the Companions. He discusses, among many topics, their refusal to accept the four rightly-guided caliphs, their claim that the vast majority of the Companions apostatized after the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), their claim that the Quran is not complete, their defaming of Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) and other Companions, their claim of perfection for the Imams and so forth. Although the work is not in great detail, it is characterized by direct quotes from the Shiah themselves with strong refutations from the Quran and Sunnah.

Works on Fiqh or Islamic Jurisprudence

Although much of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's work was dedicated to correcting the beliefs and worship of the Muslims of his time, he also spent a good deal of time in dealing with detailed fiqh issues. This aspect can be seen in a number of his books, his letters as well as a good number of *fataawa* (legal *responsa*). The books in this category include:

(i) *Mukhtasar al-Insaaf wa al-Sharh al-Kabeer*.[4] Being one of his larger works, this was an attempt to make two of the larger and more important works of Hanbali fiqh accessible to more people.

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, pp. 333-352.
[2] The remainder of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's works related to *aqeedah* may be found in volume one of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*.
[3] See Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 13, third work, pp. 1-56.
[4] This book was published in Cairo and more recently as volume two of *Mualiffaat al-Shaikh al-Imaam Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab*, comprising some 780 pages.

Hence, he abridged them into one smaller work. The two works he chose were al-Mardaawi's *al-Insaaf fi Marifah al-Raajih min al-Khilaaf* and Shams al-Deen ibn Qudaamah's *al-Sharh al-Kabeer* (both works being commentaries on Muwafaq al-Deen ibn Qudaamah's *al-Muqni*.) In each chapter, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would first summarize the important points from *al-Sharh al-Kabeer* and then would usually end it with a section from *al-Insaaf*. In general, the sections from *al-Insaaf* were inclusive of ibn Taimiyyah's conclusions on various topics. It should be noted that this work in particular shows beyond any doubt that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab did not develop a new school in Islam. Instead, he was, for the most part, a follower of the Hanbali school and would only deviate from that school when the evidence of the Quran or Sunnah was clearly in contradiction to the position of the school. However, there may be more to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's selection of these two books than might first meet the eye. *Al-Sharh al-Kabeer* is a book that touches upon different fiqh opinions across different fiqh schools and then sorts them out by choosing the strongest opinion. It is definitely a work related to *ijtihaad* and it opens the reader's mind to the thought process in fiqh. On the other hand, *al-Insaaf* is filled with the different opinions strictly within the Hanbali school and tries to show the strongest opinion among them. This latter work is more reflective of later fiqh thinking in which the stress was much more on following one school. In any case, both books lead the reader to think about fiqh in terms of determining what is the stronger opinion and the proper course to follow. Hence, Abu Sulaimaan concludes that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's choice of and goal behind these two works was to open his students' minds to the realm of fiqh thinking and to free themselve from the binds of *taqleed*.[1]

(ii) *Kitaab al-Kabaa`ir* ("The Book of the Major Sins")[2]: Here Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab discussed a number of the greater sins, starting with the sins of the heart and then the sins of the tongue, included with each one are some hadith or verses of the Quran.

[1] Abu Sulaimaan, vol. 1, p. 408. Also see Abu Sulaimaan, vol. 1, pp. 409-410 for the methodology ibn Abdul-Wahhaab used in abridging those two important works of fiqh.

[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, at the end of the volume one, pp. 1-67.

Beyond the verses or hadith, there is very little actual discussion from Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

(iii) *Kitaab al-Tahaarah* ("The Book of Ritual Purity")[1]: In this work, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab deals with major issues of ritual purity. Here, he is very succinct but his conclusions reflect a deep knowledge of the topic. Although he often presents different opinions (such as the opinions of the four schools of fiqh) on a particular issue, he dismisses weaker views with strong evidence in very concise statements. His brevity is such that it seems that this work was not intended for a novice but either for a teacher or as a summary for a well-grounded student. For example, he wrote, "It is not allowed to use gold or silver utensils in acts of purification or other acts, based on the hadith of Hudhaifah that is agreed upon [by al-Bukhari and Muslim]."[2] The novice may not be familiar with said hadith and may feel somewhat at a loss, not knowing exactly what ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was referring to. Once again in this work he refers quite often to the conclusions of ibn Taimiyyah.

He also compiled smaller, very specific works such as *Shuroot al-Salaat wa Arkaanuhaa wa Waajibaatuhaa* ("The Prerequisites, Pillars and Obligatory Acts of the Prayer"), *Adaab al-Maashi ila al-Salaat* ("The Manners of Walking to the Prayer," which covers a number of other topics, such as the manner in which the ill should pray, the Friday Prayer, the prayer for rain and so forth[3]) and *Ahkaam al-Salaat* ("The Regulations of the Prayer," two pages listing all of the important aspects of the prayer, in the format, "The prerequisites for the prayer are nine," followed by a list of them, "The essential acts of the prayer are fourteen," followed by a list of them and so forth).[4]

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[1] This work is the third work in volume three of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*. It comprises forty-three pages. (Each work in this volume has its pages numbered separately.)

[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Kitaab al-Tahaarah*, p. 8 (in volume 3 of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*).

[3] Ibn Bishr (vol. 1, p. 92) states that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote this work to refute those who claimed that he ignored the four schools of fiqh and founded his own school. Hence, this work is heavy in its Hanbali influence.

[4] All of these works are found in volume three of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*. Note that one of the works that is found in this same volume is *Ahkaam Tamanna al-Maut* ("The Rulings Related to Wishing for Death"). (This is mostly a collection of hadith and statements of early scholars covering a wide range of topics, from wishing for death to the punishment of the grave and the affairs of the soul.) Saalih al-Fauzaan did a study of this

Due to the great status that he achieved, it was only natural for people to send their questions to Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Thus, in addition to the above writings related to fiqh, a large number of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's *fatwa*s ("legal *responsa*") have also been recorded and preserved.[1]

Works Related to the Life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

(i) *Mukhtasar Seerah al-Rasool* ("Abridged Biography of the Messenger")[2]: Realizing the importance of having an accessible work for the masses regarding the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), ibn Abdul-Wahhaab prepared this abridged work. Although this work is basically an abridgment of ibn Hishaam's biography of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), ibn Abdul-Wahhaab did use other sources as well as books of hadith. Also, his work does not end with the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); he discusses a number of incidents that took place afterwards, going all the way up to the years 42 A.H. to 60 A.H. and then touching upon the Abbasid rule. During the discussion of the Prophet's life, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab does highlight some points, lessons and rulings that can be derived.

(ii) *Mukhtasar Zaad al-Maad* ("Abridgement of *Zaad al-Ma'aad*)[3]: In this work, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab abridged ibn al-Qayyim's famous work concerning the sunnah and manners of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Again, the goal was to make the original work accessible to a larger audience. For example, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab deleted all of ibn al-Qayyim's lengthy

work and showed that it is not one of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings. Al-Abood comes to the same conclusion as al-Fauzaan. See Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 172-175; al-Abood, vol. 1, pp. 231-232. In addition, al-Abood (vol. 1, pp. 233-235) notes that three other works entitled, *Naseehah al-Muslimeen bi-Ahaadeeth Khaatim al-Mursaleen*, *Risaalah fi Anwaa al-Tauheed* and *Authaq Urwa al-Imaan*, which have been attributed to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab by some authors but are not part of *Muallifaat Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab*, are not from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings.

[1] See, for example, the second half of volume four of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*.

[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 5, part 1, pp. 1-338.

[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 6, pp. 3-328.

discussions of differences of opinions and simply stated the strongest conclusion.

Works of Hadith

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's most important work related to hadith is his *Majmoo al-Hadeeth ala Abwaab al-Fiqh* ("Compilation of the Hadith According to Fiqh Topic").[1] It is similar to many of the "hadith of a legal nature" compilations of the scholars who came before him, such as ibn Hajar's work *Buloogh al-Muraam* and Ibn Taimiyya's grandfather's *al-Muntaqa.* This work contains some 4600 hadith. However, unlike some of the other works of a similar nature, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also included a good number of the statements of the Companions, Followers and later scholars. He also noted when there was a consensus on certain issues, and sometimes noted whether the hadith was authentic or weak.[2] Sometimes he would also comment on the qualities of the narrators.[3] In compiling this work, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab collected hadith from the famous standard works of hadith as well as some of the lesser-known works, such as the works of al-Daaraqutni, al-Baihaqi, al-Haakim, ibn Hibbaan, Saeed ibn Mansoor, al-Athram and others. He also benefited greatly from ibn Qudaamah's classic work of Islamic jurisprudence, *al-Mughni*.[4]

Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also compiled a number of small collections of hadith on specific topics. Although he did not comment on the hadith and at times even included weak hadith in these works, their value lies in bringing together various hadith of a specific topic. This category includes *Fadhl al-Islam* ("The virtue of Islam") which contains hadith related to the obligation of adhering to Islam, the virtue of this religion, the obligation of following the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), warnings related to innovations and so forth. Similar works included *Usool al-Imaan* ("The Foundation of Faith"), *Kitaab Fadhaail al-Quraan* ("The Book

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[1] It has been published in five volumes, covering volumes eight to twelve of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*.
[2] See, for example, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 8, p. 14.
[3] See, for example, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 8, p. 16.
[4] See the introduction to his work by Abdul Azeez al-Roomi, et al., vol. 8, p. 4.

of the Virtues of the Quran") and *Ahaadeeth fi al-Fitan wa al-Hawaadith* ("The Hadith about Tribulations and Events").

Works Related to *Tafseer* (Quranic Exegesis)

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had a unique style in his works of a *tafseer* nature. For example, for the sake of brevity, often he would not reproduce the entire verse. Then he would explain the meaning of some of its words. Then he would make a list of important points that can be concluded from the verse, which could be used by a scholar or student to further elucidate on the verse. Ibn Baaz states that the points ibn Abdul-Wahhaab alluded to demonstrate the strength of his understanding of the Quran, the correctness of his thinking and his adherence to the principles of derivation of rules.[1]

An example of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's approach may be beneficial. While discussing *al-Baqarah* 102[2], ibn Abdul-Wahhaab presents a portion of the verse and then goes on to list fifty-one points that can be deduced from that verse, including: "(4) False matters can be lyingly attributed to prophets." "(11) No matter what level of knowledge a person reaches, he can never be safe from the plan of Allah." "(12) One should not expose oneself to trials and temptations being fully confident in oneself. Instead, one should ask Allah for safety." "(18) The statement of *shirk*, even if just one statement, does not require for the disbelief of the one who makes the statement that his heart believes in it or that he has no dislike for *shirk*." "(20) Killing a soul is a greater sin than fornication." "(23) The punishment

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[1] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 167. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's book of *tafseer* forms volume five of the *Muallifaat*, comprising some 396 pages. He also has a separate work entitled *Mukhtasar Taseef Soorah al-Anfaal* ("The Abridged Commentary on *Soorah al-Anfaal*") which was published for the first time in volume 13 of *Muallifaat*.

[2] The verse reads: "They followed what the evil ones gave out (falsely) in the lifetime of Solomon: the blasphemers were, not Solomon, but the evil ones, teaching men magic, and such things as came down at Babylon to the angels Harut and Marut. But neither of these taught anyone (such things) without saying: 'We are only for trial; so do not blaspheme.' They learned from them the means to sow discord between man and wife. But they could not thus harm anyone except by Allah's permission. And they learned what harmed them, not what profited them. And they knew that the buyers of (magic) would have no share in the happiness of the Hereafter. And vile was the price for which they did sell their souls, if they but knew!"

for a sin could be greater than what the scholar thinks." "(25) It is a blessing that a person is punished for his sins in this life [rather than in the Hereafter]." "(29) [True magic] does have an effect as Allah says, 'Sows discord between a man and his wife.'" "(46) The cause behind this *shirk* was the purchase of something trivial and passing from this worldly life."[1]

The Collected Writings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab

Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia commissioned a project to collect together the writings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. The result was a thirteen volume set. Many of the volumes and much of their content were discussed above. However, prior to this work, other anthologies were compiled that consisted of many of the writings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab as well as the writings of his descendents and foremost followers. The following two works are of note: (1) *Majmooah al-Rasaail wa al-Masaail al-Najdiyyah li-Bad Ulamaa Najd al-Alaam*: This is a five volume set that was compiled by various individuals. It was first published in 1349 A.H. It contains a number of letters, writings and *fatwa*s from the descendents of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and other scholars of Najd. (2) *Al-Durar al-Saniyyah fi al-Ajwabah al-Najdiyyah* compiled and arranged by Abdul Rahmaan ibn Muhammad ibn Qaasim al-Najdi: This work comprises eleven volumes and covers the full spectrum of the faith (from beliefs, ritual acts of worship, business transactions, marriage, jihad and commentary on verses of the Quran). Again, it contains writings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, his descendents and leading scholars.

His Students[2]

The number of his students—many who reached prominence as scholars and judges—probably reached into the hundreds. They include:

(1) His son Husain (d. 1224). He was blind yet known to be an excellent scholar. He had studied with his father and other scholars. He became the successor to his father. He was a judge in al-Diriyyah.

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[1] See Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 5, pp. 21-25.
[2] Cf., Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 93-95.

He had classes for the jurists and scholars of hadith. He was dedicated to acts of worship. He died in the plague of al-Diriyyah. He had a number of children who became scholars in their own right, such as Ali, Hasan and Abdul-Rahmaan.

(2) His son Abdullah, born in 1165 A.H. in al-Diriyyah and raised there. He specialized in Hanbali fiqh, Quranic commentary, *aqeedah* and Arabic language. He accompanied Saud ibn Abdul-Azeez when they entered Makkah in 1218 A.H. He was known for his bravery and fought valiantly when Ibraaheem Pasha's army attacked al-Diriyyah. He was taken prisoner in 1233 A.H. and sent, with his son Abdul-Rahmaan and other members of his family, to Egypt where he remained a prisoner and died in 1242 A.H. His son Sulaimaan died in al-Diriyyah while fighting against Ibraaheem's army.[1]

(3) His oldest son Ali (most likely d. 1245). He was perhaps the greatest scholar and jurist of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's children. He was known for his great piety. He was offered the position of judge but refused to take it. He was also sent to Egypt in 1233 A.H. by Ibraaheem's army. However, it is said that he returned to Najd in 1241.

(4) His son Ibraaheem. He also died in Egypt. He was known for his knowledge but never took a position as judge.[2]

(5) His grandson Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Hasan. He was the judge for both Turki ibn Abdullah and Faisal in Riyadh. Known for his numerous excellent writings.

Other prominent students include Abdul-Azeez ibn Abdullah al-Husayyin, Hamad ibn Naasir ibn Uthmaan ibn Muammar, Muhammad ibn Suwailam, Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Khamees, Husain ibn Ghannaam and many others.

Of course, one cannot forget the first leaders of the Saudi state. There was, for example, Abdul-Azeez, the son of the *Ameer* of al-Diriyyah Muhammad ibn Saud (1132 A.H./1720-1218 A.H./1803 C.E.). While a very young man, he wrote to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab while ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was still in Huraimila, asking him to send an explanation of *soorah al-Faatihah*. He became the leader of the state after the death of his father in 1179 A.H. The size of the state

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[1] An example of his writings may be found in al-Ruwaishid, vol. 1, pp. 127ff.

[2] For much more information concerning the sons and grandsons of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, see al-Nadwi, pp. 70-86.

grew greatly under his rule. He was assassinated in 1218 A.H. Al-Shaukaani had great praise for the epistles that Abdul-Azeez wrote filled with evidence from the Quran and hadith emphasizing *tauheed* and avoidance of *shirk*, grave-worship.[1]

Saud ibn Abdul-Azeez ibn Muhammad ibn Saud, the third leader of the new state (1163 A.H./1750 C.E.-1229 A.H./1814 C.E.), studied for two years with Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He was known to be very intelligent and a student of fiqh and hadith. He wrote to his governors and workers to teach them about Islam. The pledge of allegiance was given to him on the day that his father died in al-Diriyyah. About Saud ibn Abdul-Azeez ibn Muhammad, Lothrop Stoddard wrote, "Though possessing great military power, Saud always considered himself responsible to public opinion and never encroached upon the legitimate freedom of his subjects. His government, though stern, was able and just. The Wahhabi judges were competent and honest. Robbery became almost unknown, so well was the public peace maintained."[2]

Thuniyaan and Mushaari, the brothers of Muhammad ibn Saud, became ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's students while he was still in al-Uyainah, beginning with correspondence and then going to al-Uyainah to work directly with ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

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[1] An example of his writing is found in al-Ruwaishid, vol. 1, pp. 96-126.
[2] Quoted from Siddiqi, vol. 2, p. 1447.

Note on the Use of the Words "Wahhabis" and "Wahhabism"

The followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab never used the term "Wahhabis" or "Wahhabism" in referring to themselves or their beliefs. In general, they would use terms like "the Muslims", the *muwahhideen* ("the monotheists") and they would call their message, "the call of true monotheism (*tauheed*)," "the religion of Islam," "the call of the *Salaf*" (referring to the early, pious generations of Muslims) or just "the call."[1] The *muwahhideen* was their favorite term to be used for themselves, as a way of distinguishing themselves from other Muslims who were involved in practices that strike at the root of true monotheism.[2]

It is very clear that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was nothing more than a follower of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), his Companions, the followers and some of the great scholars who came later, such as Imam Ahmad, ibn Taimiyyah, ibn al-Qayyim, ibn Katheer and others. However, to give ibn Abdul-Wahhaab a name that would correctly represent his approach—such as *salafi* (meaning one who follows the ways of the pious predecessors)—would not have met the goal and purpose of those who came up with the name "Wahhabi".[3]

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[1] In fact, speaking in reference to the 20th Century, Muhammad Haamid al-Fiqi stated that the people of Najd would never use the term "Wahhabi." He said that all of them, including their religious leaders, many of whom were descendents of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, would call themselves Najdis, with respect to where they are from, and Hanbalis, with respect to their religion and beliefs. Al-Fiqi is quoted in Dhaahir, p. 29.

[2] Cf., al-Uthaimeen, *al-Shaikh*, p. 102. Al-Uthaimeen further notes that Winder, in his book *Saudi Arabia in the Nineteenth Century*, says that when the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would use the term, "the Muhammadan call," they are referring to Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Al-Uthaimeen says that such is not correct. The term "the Muhammadan call" in the writings of the followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab actually refers to the message of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

[3] A number of authors stressed the point that it is wrong to call them Wahhabis since that name would be derived from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's father's name and not his name. Al-Uthaimeen (*al-Shaikh*, p. 101) downplays this controversy and states that it is actually no different from the term Hanbali, which is related to the grandfather of Ahmad. It would not have been expected that they be called "Muhammadans" as such would not set them apart from the rest of the Muslims. However, at the same time, there were many, including Neibuhr, who

Al-Uthaimeen states that there is no doubt that the first people who used this term were the opponents of the call (*dawah*), although it is not clear if it were the opponents inside Najd or outside Najd that first used this term. What is clear, though, is that by the time of or shortly after Muhammad Ali Pasha's attack on al-Diriyyah, the term started to be common.[1]

In any case, there is no question that this term was originally used in order to "drive people away" from the teachings of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. It was claimed that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was calling to a new religion or to a fifth *madhhab* (school of jurisprudence). Of course, in addition to calling them "Wahhabis," they were also called heretics, infidels and Khawarij.[2]

During the past century, there developed a difference of opinion among the followers of the teachings of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab as to whether it is acceptable to term themselves "Wahhabis." For those who accept it, they feel that the teachings of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab have become so clear to all and sundry that the term "Wahhabi" is simply another term for following the way of the pious early generations of Islam. Hence, they see no problem in using that term. Thus, Abdul-Azeez ibn Muhammad ibn Ibraheem, a descendent of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, writing in current times stated (perhaps too optimistically),

> The term Wahhabism in our age does not create any problem for us. In this age of speed, new inventions have narrowed the distance... [People] now know for themselves what they used to know through such means that altered reality... Truth is now manifest and evident to persons of vision. People now know that

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mistakenly thought the name came from the original teacher of the call, that is Muhammad's father.

[1] Al-Uthaimeen, *al-Shaikh*, p. 101. See also al-Nadwi, p. 203.

[2] The missionary Zweimer noted that ibn al-Qayyim had similar views to that of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and concluded that although ibn al-Qayyim considered himself a Hanbali, he was actually a Wahhabi. The fact that ibn al-Qayyim lived centuries before ibn Abdul-Wahhaab seemed to have been lost on Zweimer. See al-Nadwi, p. 201. Actually, it became the vogue that anyone who followed the Quran and Sunnah and opposed *shirk* was called a "Wahhabi." Al-Saabiq, earlier this century, wrote that he had met many who called Imam Ahmad, ibn Taimiyyah and others like them "Wahhabis." He stated that if the Companion Abu Bakr would appear among these people, they would definitely call him a "Wahhabi" also. See Fauzaan al-Saabiq, *Al-Bayaan wa al-Ishhaar li-Kashf Zaig al-Mulhid al-Haaj al-Mukhtaar* (N.c. N.p. 2001), p. 60.

> Wahhabism only means the people of the Sunnah, the Sunnites, clinging to the doctrines of the pious predecessors and defending them against all kinds of inroads.[1]

Indeed, Aali-Bootaami says (also probably too optimistically) that the plot of the enemies of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab on this point definitely backfired. What was originally meant to be a disparaging term has now become the signpost for the true following of the way of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Once one hears the word "Wahhabi" today, one knows that it refers to someone who is calling to a true following of the Quran and Sunnah, the following of evidence, the ordering of good and eradicating of evil, the elimination of heresies and superstitions and an adherence to the ways of the righteous predecessors. In fact, these "Wahhabis" continue to grow in spreading the truth while the Ottoman and Sharif states have gone from existence.[2]

Those who do not object to this term include ibn Sahmaan, Muhammad Haamid al-Faqi, Muhammad Rasheed Ridha and al-Nadwi. Those who continue to object to it include Saalih al-Fauzaan[3] and ibn Jibreen.[4]

However, in the current situation, once again, the term is being used to drive people away from the true Islam, in the same way that the term "fundamentalist" is being used to belittle those who are practicing the true Islam. Especially in this day and age, many people lack the bravado or otherwise find it unwise and imprudent to come out and attack Islam openly. Hence, they try to find other means by which to attack Islam—while at the same time appearing to be sympathetic to Muslims and some form of Islam. There has to be a smokescreen. The attempt is to try to fight against any implementation of Islam that will have any real meaning and significance in the lives of Muslims. The West fears the challenge of Islam and the only way that they can defeat Islam—the way that they have been following for centuries—is by trying to paint it in the worse possible way. Nowadays, that means to portray those Muslims who truly follow the

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[1] Quoted in al-Huqail, p. 98.
[2] Ali-Bootaami, pp. 65-66.
[3] al-Fauzaan, "*Taqeebaat ala ma Dhakarahu al-Ustaadh Abdul-Kareem al-Khateeb*" pp. 68-69.
[4] For ibn Jibreen's views, see al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 76.

Quran and Sunnah as nothing more than fundamentalists, extremists, backwards and terrorists. In fact, one of the methods that is used by people who are "anti-Wahhaabis" is that they trace aspects that they deem unacceptable back to the "Wahhaabis" while never mentioning that those things are explicitly mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah. Hence, their problem is not with the "Wahhaabis" but it is truly with the clear and unequivocal meaning of the Quran and Sunnah.

A final important point is that the "followers" may not always reflect the true stance of the original teacher or teachings. This is true for any leader. Any set of teachings, call or movement may have followers who are attached to it who do not completely understand the message, who are ignorant in themselves or who are not completely sincere in their attachment to the call. Indeed, with respect to any set of teachings, one must distinguish between the knowledgeable followers who are truly carrying on the message in word and deed and the non-scholar followers. Hence, actions may be taken for which the original teacher and teachings cannot be blamed. As al-Uthaimeen noted, this problem began quite early with respect to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's call.[1] During the lifetime of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, some of his followers objected to the descendants of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) wearing a distinctive garment to mark themselves off from the others. However, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself did not object to that and he had to correct his "followers." A second, more important, example given by al-Uthaimeen concerns the year 1217 A.H. (after the death of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab), when the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab conquered Taif. The "followers" in their zealousness destroyed the religious books in the city. It was Abdullah, the son of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, who had to censure that action and try to correct their ways.[2]

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[1] One must never forget the fact that many who eventually fell under the umbrella of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's leadership were ignorant Bedouins who had a very scant knowledge of Islam. Even though ibn Abdul-Wahhaab constantly sent teachers to different areas, that could not be sufficient to remove years of ignorance and a mindset that is not conducive to learning. Obviously, the actions of this type of people will not necessarily reflect the teachings of the leader.

[2] Al-Uthaimeen, *al-Shaikh*, p. 103.

In contemporary times, two things are happening: everyone is being labeled a "Wahhabi" and "Wahhabis" are being blamed for everything. Many people who claim to be "Wahhabis" are doing things that are inconsistent with the principles of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or, if that cannot be derived directly, the way of the *salaf* upon which ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings are derived. Thus, once again, it may be a time in which it is preferable not to use the term "Wahhabi" or "Wahhabism" and, instead, force all to trace their claims back to the Quran and Sunnah.

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's Influence Outside of Najd

In the previous chapter, there was a discussion of the state of the Islamic world at the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. That sad description was true for virtually the entire Muslim world. It was in that setting that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab appeared and changed the course of history. In Najd, in particular, this call started whose fruits continue today. Indeed, the descendents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself continue to carry the banner of the true *tauheed*. In other areas also the coming of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab contributed to and sometimes even ignited a return to the true teachings of Islam or an Islamic revival that is still of influence today. In fact, the influence of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings, in one way or another, has reached all corners of the Muslim world. Religious peoples and communities sprung up opposing licentiousness, innovations and superstitions while teaching people the authentic teachings of the faith. Thus, writing in 1896, Thomas Arnold wrote about "the Wahhabi reformation," at the end stressing some of the truly valuable ways in which ibn Abdul-Wahhaab affected the Muslim world,

> Though this new departure has long lost all political significance outside the confines of Najd, as a religious revival its influence is felt throughout Africa, India and the Malay Archipelago even to the present day, and has given birth to numerous movements which take rank among the most powerful influences in the Islamic world. In the preceding pages [of Arnold's book] it has already been shown how closely connected many of the modern Muslim missions are with this widespread revival: the fervid zeal it has stirred up, the new life it has infused into existing religious institutions, the impetus it has given to theological study and to the

organisation of devotional exercises, having all served to awake and keep alive the innate proselytising spirit of Islam.[1]

Introductory Comments

Having quoted Arnold's statement, it is still difficult to write conclusively about the extent of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's influence. This is so for the following reasons:

(1) Those who are truly students and "influenced" have to be distinguished from those who are supporters and along the same path, having come to that path independent of the influence of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. This category would have to include people like Muhammad ibn Ismaaeel al-Sanaani and Muhammad ibn Ali al-Shaukaani, both of Yemen, as well as ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's direct teachers, such as al-Sindi, Ibrahim ibn Saif and so on. These people are still of great importance because they agreed with ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, if not verbally then in their teachings, that this path is the one true path.

(2) Those who liked some aspects of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's reform but were not actually truly followers, in the sense that just one aspect does not make one "influenced" especially when the entire portion of one's teachings goes against what he said. In particular, mention will be made later of Iqbal and Muhammad Abduh.

(3) Any time a Muslim individual, organization or group appeared that was displeasing to the colonial powers or some sectors of Muslims, they would be termed "Wahhabis," even if they had no contact with the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or very little in common with ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. This was simply a propaganda device to drive Muslims away from that movement. In some cases, there may have been no substance whatever to said claim. In other cases, the movement may have had many of the same teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, leading the people truly back to the Quran and Sunnah. The question then arises: How can people be prevented from being attracted to a call that is so consistent with the clear revelations that no doubt many will accept that movement? The answer: Give that movement a name that will drive people away from it. In the past, that

[1] T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1975), p. 431.

name for many locales was "Wahhabism," which had already faced so much negative and false propaganda that the mere mention of the name would keep many from even looking into what the movement was teaching. (Today, the term "Wahhabism" is still being used to give the impression that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers were nothing but some kind of fringe "movement." However, other derogatory-sounding labels have also been applied to those who follow the Quran and Sunnah. These terms include "fundamentalist" and "extremist.")

(4) The continuous attacks upon "Wahhabis" led to a situation where it was dangerous for people to show any liking or link with them. Hence, even if someone greatly admired ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and closely followed his teachings, he may not have had the ability to express that publicly or it would not be prudent or beneficial to express it publicly. To take one example, in 1908, Muhammad Rasheed Ridha, while visiting Damascus, gave a lecture in a mosque. A disturbance broke out when Ridha began discussing the concept of *shirk* and praying to intercessors rather than to God. Saalih al-Tunisi stood up in the mosque and warned the people about following the ways of the "Wahhabis." This disturbance had actually been pre-planned. Ridha then left Damascus, leaving the *salafi* scholars Bitaar and Jamaal al-Deen al-Qaasimi to have to face the accusations of having "Wahhabi" views. Commins describes the aftermath,

> The anti-salafi ulama accused Qasimi and Bitar of sharing Rida's Wahhabi views, and they instigated crowds against the two men. Qasimi's enemies even tried to have him relieved of his posts at the Sinaniyyah mosque. In this intimidating atmosphere, both salafi shaykhs secluded themselves in their homes, and for three months Jamal al-Din abandoned his posts. During that time he went out only for the Friday congregational prayer at a mosque near his home. Ten days after the outbreak, Qasimi wrote in his diary: "Since the day of al-Shaykh Rashid Rida's story on 29 Shaban until today, my brothers and I are annoyed and distressed, staying at home because the townspeople plot against us and accuse my brother Id of causing the disturbance." Three months passed before

> Jamal al-Din ventured to return to his duties at the mosque, and Bitar kept to his house five weeks longer.[1]

In another example, when the Iraqi al-Aloosi wrote his book refuting the allegations of al-Nabahaani concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers, al-Aloosi was not able to put his true name on the cover of the book out of fear from the attacks that the *salafi*s were receiving at that time. The reason for that fear was that the Ottoman Sultan, Abdul-Hameed, who had control over Baghdad, Hijaz and Turkey, had a close alliance with the Sufis and other groups. Even the publisher, Faraj-Allah Zaki would only put his initials on the cover. It was not until the government in Istanbul passed Western style laws concerning freedom of the press that they felt that they could come out with a publication having the full name of the author and publisher on it.[2]

Additionally, Abdul-Aleem al-Bastawi, writing about the Indo-Pak subcontinent during the time of Sideeq Hasan Khan, who lived from 1248-1307, stated that during that time, Najd was overtaken and the lies and falsehood about Najdis were spread throughout the Muslim world, such that it was very difficult for anyone to publicly defend them. He says that the effects of the defeat of the *mujahideen*[3] in Balakot, India in 1246 were still strong. People were still being threatened and punished for following the ways of the Sunnah, such that if one were to say *ameen* aloud in the prayer, he would be severely punished.[4]

(5) In addition, those who have written on this question seem to go to an extreme. Some try to encompass virtually every movement since the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab as a direct result of his teachings and efforts. For example, Abdul-Haleem al-Jandi wrote, “Every reform movement in the two centuries after the death of ibn Abdul-

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[1] David Dean Commins, “The Salafi Islamic Reform Movement in Damascus, 1885-1914: Religious Intellectuals, Politics, and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria,” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1985), pp. 357-358. The entire incident is discussed on pp. 354-358.

[2] Muhammad ibn Subail, introduction to Mahmood Shukri al-Aloosi, *Ghaayah al-Amaani fi al-Radd ala al-Nabahaani* (Daar Ihyaa al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah, n.d.), vol. 1, pp. 8-9.

[3] That is, those who participate in jihad or the struggle to establish the religion of Allah.

[4] Al-Bastawi, pp. 211-213.

Wahhaab are students of his in thought and live by his teachings in general and in detail."[1] Al-Abood notes that many movements have been attributed to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's influence even though their methods or goals are very different from his.[2] Later, after listing a number of movements that were supposedly influenced by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, al-Abood notes that without substantial evidence, it cannot be claimed that these movements were influenced by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. In most cases, he says, the claim for the supposed influence is based on reports of Westerners who are just relying on presumption. He says that in reality most of those movements were home-grown, as a result of their own environments, and did not claim to be followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or his teachings. He even says that some such leaders may not have even heard of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab save through the false propaganda that was spread about him.[3]

On the other hand, others try to virtually deny any influence or effect of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings outside of Najd.[4] For example, Abdul-Kareem al-Khateeb stated that such movements were simply a natural outcome of events and there is no reason to assume or claim any influence of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab upon any of the other reform movements.[5]

A reason for the first extreme, as alluded to above, is that one can find many who came after ibn Abdul-Wahhaab who were attracted to some aspect of his teachings or who promoted one or two aspects that were very similar to what ibn Abdul-Wahhaab promoted. This has led some writers to claim that such people have been influenced by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or are from the followers of ibn

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[1] Quoted by Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 2, p. 711, from Abdul-Haleem al-Jandi, *al-Imaam Muhammad Abdul-Wahhaab wa Intisaar al-Minhaj al-Salafi*.

[2] Al-Abood, vol. 2, p. 373.

[3] Al-Abood, vol. 2, pp. 463-464. Among the groups or individuals that he specifically mentioned as having doubtful ties to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab were the Sannusi movement, the movement of Ahmad ibn Ifraan, the Faraid movement, the movement of Nazaar Ali, the Padri movement in Indonesia, the Muslim Brotherhood, Muhammad Abduh, Jamaal al-Deen al-Afghaani, the Mahdi movement, Ish Muhammad Kool and a few others. He also states (vol. 2, p. 465) that many of these individuals or movements did not actually have *salafi* beliefs at all. He then (vol. 2, pp. 465-473) discussed in detail the Sannusi movement, the Mahdi movement of the Sudan and Muhammad Abduh.

[4] See Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 2, p. 711.

[5] Abdul-Kareem al-Khateeb, *al-Dawah al-Wahhaabiyyah* (Beirut: Dar al-Shurooq, n.d.), p. 5.

Abdul-Wahhaab. An example of that nature is Muhammad Abduh, who fought against superstitions, Sufism and other deviations that were dominant at his time. He also stressed a return to the original sources of Islam. This has made some writers include him among those influenced by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. In reality, though, Muhammad Abduh's approach and understanding of Islam were completely different than that of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

Ibn Baaz explains the reason behind such varying conclusions concerning the influence of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. The apparent great difference, he writes, boils down to two causes. First is a failure to exactly define "influence." Does it mean that a person followed his methodology, studied from his books, learned from students of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and so forth? Or does it simply imply a similarity in approach and methodology while ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was the first to come with said approach in the current era? The second reason is the attempt to apply one conclusion to a number of different movements and personalities even though they may differ greatly in how they originated, in their environment and in their methods. For example, it is difficult to make the same judgment concerning Uthmaan Dan Fodio (of what is nowadays Nigeria) and the Mahdi of the Northern Sudan. The former learned directly from students of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings and efforts, lived for sometime in the Hijaz and studied ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's works while the latter had a very different background and believed himself to be the Mahdi, although he did not fit the description found in the hadith.[1] Furthermore, the Mahdi did not visit the Hijaz nor is there any evidence that he studied the works of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

Thus, if by influence one means a complete acceptance and following of the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, then it is true that most of the movements that have come since ibn Abdul-Wahhaab were not influenced in that sense. If, however, by influence one means a kind of general effect or spiritual influence, wherein ibn Abdul-Wahhaab revived the spirit of Islam, the concept of Islamic

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[1] In fact, when the scholars of Najd heard about the Mahdi in the Sudan, they sent Ali ibn Naasir ibn Waadi to the Sudan in 1299 A.H. to verify if he could truly have been the Mahdi. He returned reporting that the Mahdi of the Sudan was not the awaited Mahdi mentioned in the hadith. See Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 2, p. 716.

brotherhood, the concept of implementing Islam completely from its true sources, then definitely the other movements that heard about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab were effected by his outcome and his works. That, though, can be true for any effective movement in the Muslim world: when its news reaches other parts of the Muslim world, it will revive their hope in Islam and reinvigorate their efforts to bring about the true Islam. Furthermore, when they received the true news of what ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stood for, then definitely this would engender a kind of love and support for one's fellow Muslim who stood and sacrificed for the sake of Allah. If this is what is meant by "influence," then it is true that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab influenced—or perhaps more rightly stated affected—the majority of the movements that came after his time.[1]

Furthermore, it is not necessary that everyone who makes the same call that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab made was actually influenced by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. In reality, any and all who return to the true path of the Quran and Sunnah as implemented and taught by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions will come to virtually the same conclusions that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab came to. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab often would say that he is not coming with anything new. That is true. Thus, someone else may come to the same conclusions and teachings quite independent of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. That, in itself, does not discount the value of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's work. Indeed, it merely demonstrates once again that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was following the true Islam as passed down by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and as recognized by many scholars before his time and after his time.[2]

Finally, it must be noted that the discussion of this chapter will concentrate on movements and supporters before the mid-1900s. The

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[1] Cf., Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 2, pp. 713-718.

[2] Thus, in Jumuah's study, he divides the categories of influenced peoples and groups into the following categories: (1) Islamic movements that established states on virtually the same principles as those of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab; (2) Callers who supported the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab; (3) Movements that established states that were influenced by the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab; (4) Religious "revolutions" that were influenced by the call of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab; (5) Religious reformers who were influenced by the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. See Muhammad Kamaal Jumuah, *Intishaar Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab Khaarij al-Jazeerah al-Arabiyyah* (Riyadh: Matbooaat Daarah al-Malik Abdul-Azeez, 1981), *passim*.

reason for this is to demonstrate that although the means of communication and media were not that strong, the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had become known and to some extent accepted long before the "oil money" started pouring into Saudi Arabia. Of course, with the new riches and with breakthroughs in communication, it was possible for ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings to spread to an even greater extent. Thus, if one wanted to review ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's influence today, it would be too great to capture. Virtually, every country and Muslim community is familiar with his teachings. Furthermore, his teachings are such—being so consistent with the Quran and Sunnah—that as soon as many Muslims hear them, it resonates in their hearts and mind. They readily accept such teachings regardless of whether they are told that such teachings have been propagated by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or not.[1]

Below is a discussion of some of the groups and individual it is said were influenced by or were supporters of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[2]

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[1] It should be noted that the religious people of Saudi Arabia have found themselves in a no-win situation. When they take the wealth that Allah has provided for them and use it to build mosques, schools and centers throughout the world, they are accused of "propagating their brand of Islam." However, if they would not use that money in such a fashion, one would undoubtedly hear cries about how much wealth Allah has given these people and yet they do not use it to help their brethren Muslims.

[2] It is customary in biographical works to record the praises of the individual being discussed. However, perhaps due to all of the opposition and false propaganda concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, numerous authors have recorded the scholars' and researchers' words of praise for Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Thus, for example, Usrah (pp. 115-125) records Muhammad ibn Ismaaeel al-Sanaani, ibn Bishr, Muhammad ibn Ali al-Shaukaani, Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Hifdhi (a scholar from al-Aseer in the south), Mahmood Shukri al-Aloosi, Umraan ibn Ridhwaan from Persia, Sulaimaan ibn Sahmaan and others. Al-Ruwaishid has eighty-five pages (vol. 2, pp. 275-360) of scholarly opinions concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, quoting about fifty Muslim scholars, writers, Orientalists and historians.

Yemen

Muhammad ibn Ismaaeel al-Sanaani[1] (1099-1182 A.H.) and Muhammad ibn Ali al-Shaukaani (1173-1250 A.H.) were two great scholars of Yemen who believed in the same message as that of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. In fact, both al-Sanaani and al-Shaukaani wrote lengthy odes to Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[2] Furthermore, their writings were quite similar to his type of writings, stressing the pure beliefs, fighting against acts of *shirk* and opening the door to *itjihaad*. Hence, one cannot really say that they were influenced by him but they definitely were supporters. Logically, they would have also encouraged their students to study and be in touch with the followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. In fact, Muhammad ibn Naasir al-Shareef al-Tuhaami was a student of al-Shaukaani who wrote a book refuting Daawood ibn Jarjees in his attacks against Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[3]

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[1] It is authentically reported and not doubted that al-Sanaani wrote an ode in praise of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. However, another ode appeared in which al-Sanaani censures ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. It is claimed that this second ode came after al-Sanaani learned the reality of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings and thus he disapproved of him in the end. This second ode is commented upon by Yoosuf ibn Ibraaheem, the grandson of al-Sanaani. It is an established fact that this Yoosuf was opposed to the beliefs of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and it is only through him that this ode is known. Furthermore, this second ode has many portions to it that contradict what is definitively established concerning the beliefs of al-Sanaani. Hence, it is concluded that this second ode is nothing more than a fabrication. It is probably true that at first al-Sanaani did not favor ibn Abdul-Wahhaab based on reports he heard from opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab who had come from Najd, such as Murbad ibn Ahmad al-Wuhaibi al-Tameemi of Huraimila. After he learned the truth about his call, al-Sanaani praised ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in glowing terms. Sulaimaan ibn Sahmaan wrote a work entitled *Tabri`ah al-Shaikhain al-Imaamain min Tazweer Ahl al-Kadhib wa al-Main* proving that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and al-Sanaani are free of the false claims made against them and that both of them held the same beliefs. Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 39; al-Husain, p. 422.

[2] The text of al-Shaukaani's ode may be found in al-Husain, pp. 70-78.

[3] For more details on ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's influence in Yemen, see al-Abood, vol. 2, pp. 382-395.

Iraq

In the eyes of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers, the tombs and mausoleums that the Shiites in particular erected in Iraq are part and parcel of the *shirk* that needs to be removed. Thus, Abdul-Azeez ibn Muhammad ibn Saud sent a letter to Sulaiman Pasha al-Kabeer, the governor of Baghdad, with a copy of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's *Kitaab al-Tauheed*, for the scholars of Iraq to study this book and believe in its content. Unfortunately, though, the response was not positive from the scholars of Baghdad at that time.[1]

However, the Iraqi scholar Abdul-Azeez Bik al-Shaadi when to Hajj and met with the leaders from the Saud family. He even passed by al-Diriyyah on his way back to Iraq. He was convinced of the truth of their call and returned to Iraq and became an active propagator of the message. Over many years, he was able to teach many the correct beliefs of Islam.[2]

Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Saeed al-Suwaidi al-Baghdaadi al-Abbaasi was a scholar of hadith and history. Born in Baghdad, he died in Damascus 1232 A.H. He had a number of writings and even corresponded with ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He tried to convince the governor of Baghdad, Sulaimaan Pasha al-Sagheer, to adhere to the call of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. His methodology was definitely the same as that of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[3] He imbibed his student Shihaab al-Deen al-Aloosi (1802-1854 C.E.) with the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and set the scholarly family of al-Aloosi on the path of defending ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[4]

Perhaps the most important influence supporting and propagating the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in Iraq were the members of this Aloosi family. Mahmood al-Aloosi (d. 1835 C.E.) was the compiler of a famous Quranic commentary. Numaan (d. 1899 C.E.) was staunch in his defense of ibn Taimiyyah, studied in Egypt and Makkah, and was in continual contact with Sideeq Hasan Khan of India (sending his son Ali to India to study with Sideeq Hasan Khan).[5]

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[1] Cf., Jumuah, p. 181.
[2] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 25; Jumuah, p. 182.
[3] See al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 25; Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 2, p. 688.
[4] Cf., Commins, p. 59.
[5] See Commins, pp. 60-63.

Mahmood Shukri (1857-1924 A.H.) was a great defender of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, author of *Tarikh Najd* ("The History of Najd"), a commentary on ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's work *Masaail al-Jaahiliyyah*, and two books refuting opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab (one refuting ibn Jarjees and the other refuting al-Nabahaani).[1]

Al-Shaam ("Greater Syria")[2]

In 1793, the forces of Abdul-Azeez ibn Muhammad ibn Saud were able to conquer a portion of "Greater Syria". By 1791, some of the Bedouin tribes had accepted the rule of the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Some of these are the same tribes that Burckhardt later visited and noticed the influence of the "Wahabbi" teachers, judges and leaders. After 1806, according to Jumuah, the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had preachers and scholars entering the main cities of Syria and propagating their message.[3]

One of the most influential of the *salafi* scholars in Syria was Jamaal al-Deen al-Qaasimi (1283 A.H./1866 C.E.-1332 A.H./1914 C.E.). He was already a prominent Imam and scholar by the time he visited Egypt and Madinah. (In addition to having visited Madinah, he and other Syrian scholars were in contact with the Iraqi scholars and strong supporters of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab of the al-Aloosi family.[4]) Upon his return to Syria, he was accused of attempting to start a new school, *al-Madhhab al-Jamaali*, and arrested in 1313 A.H. The main accusations against him were a tendency to *ijtihaad* ("juristic reasoning"), support of the "Wahhabis" and membership in the Arab Nationalist Assembly. However, being accused of being a "Wahhabi" was the greatest accusation one would ever have to face in front of the Ottoman/Turkish authorities.

Other influential religious leaders who gave their support to and spread the *salafi* and "Wahhabi" teachings in that area at that time were Abdul-Razzaaq al-Bitaar, Taahir al-Jazaairi, Muhammad Kaamil

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[1] For more on the Aloosi family, see al-Zuhaili, vol. 3, p. 335-336; Jumuah, pp. 183-193.
[2] "Greater Syria" would include portions of what are today Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.
[3] Jumuah, p. 124.
[4] See Jumuah, p. 131; Commins, p. 53.

al-Qasaab, Ameer Shakeeb Arsalaan and Muhammad Kurd Ali. The political and social environment was very difficult in Syria for anyone to openly and clearly espousing the views of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab but many of the above (such as Arsalaan and Kurd Ali) clearly mentioned the "Wahhabis" by name and stated that they were calling to the way of the Quran and Sunnah.[1] Another scholar who was most open in support of the doctrines of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was Muhammad al-Attar (1763-1827 C.E.). However, due to that he "lived in seclusion and had few students because people shunned him."[2] These *salafi* scholars of this era, including al-Qaasimi, also had good ties with Muhammad Rasheed Ridha, who was prominent in disseminating the writings of both ibn Taimiyyah and ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[3]

Egypt

The historian and Azhari scholar Abdul-Rahmaan al-Jabarti (1167-1237 A.H.) was very influenced and impressed by the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and he spread their thoughts in Egypt. He saw in them the greatest potential to revive the Muslim world.[4]

One of the most influential and controversial figures in the Muslim world at the beginning of the 20th century was Muhammad Abduh. He was probably familiar with ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings. Actually, Fauzaan al-Saabiq, the first "Saudi ambassador" to Egypt, praises him. He did believe in opposing innovations and superstitious beliefs as well as opening the door to ijtihaad and freer thought. In the process, he opposed Sufism. That was probably the extent to which there was any agreement between the two sets of teachings. Otherwise, although called by many a *salafi* ("a follower of the early, pious generations), Abduh had no interest in going back to the way Islam was understood and practiced by the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Instead, he

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[1] See al-Abood, vol. 2, pp. 410-411.
[2] Commins, p. 59.
[3] For other aspects of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's influence in "Greater Syria," see al-Abood, vol. 2, pp. 395-412.
[4] See al-Zuhaili, vol. 2, p. 334.

wanted to forge ahead with a new understanding of Islam that would be compatible with the European West of his time.

Muhammad Rasheed Ridha (1282/1865-1354/1935) was originally from Syria but he moved to Egypt in 1891 C.E. After moving to Egypt, he became very close to Muhammad Abduh and for many years was the main espouser of his view. However, in many ways, he was very different from his Shaikh Muhammad Abduh, especially when it comes to a leaning toward the *salaf*. He was a strong supporter of ibn Taimiyyah—publishing his works—as well as of the scholars of Najd—publishing their works in his magazine and in a separate anthology entitled *Majmooah al-Rasaail wa al-Masaail al-Najdiyyah*. In his introduction to al-Sahwasaani's refutation of Dahlaan, Ridha, in a lengthy passage, described ibn Abdul-Wahhaab as a *mujaddid* ("religious revivalist"), repelling the innovations and deviations in Muslim life.[1] Through his magazine, *al-Manaar*, Muhammad Rasheed Ridha greatly contributed to the spread of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings in the whole Muslim world. In fact, he published some of his articles from that magazine in a work entitled *al-Wahhaabiyoon wa al-Hijaaz (*"The Wahhabis and the Hijaz"). His magazine was unique in its thought and popularity. As a result of many students coming from all over to study in al-Azhar, in Cairo, this magazine's popularity spread throughout North Africa, Greater Syria and even into the Indo-Pak subcontinent and Malay Archipelago.[2]

Afterwards, Muhammad Haamid al-Faqi was one of the strongest supporters of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings in Egypt. He was the founder of "the association of supporters of the Muhammadan Sunnah."

North Africa

Concerning Algeria, Uwais makes the point that there were always "reform" movements in Algeria trying to take people back to the Quran and Sunnah, in other words calls and teachings that were

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[1] Muhammad Rasheed Ridha, introduction to Muhammad Basheer al-Sahsawaani, *Sayaanah al-Insaan an Waswaswah al-Shaikh Dahlaan* (third edition, no publication information given), pp. 6-7.

[2] For more details about Muhammad Rasheed Ridha, see Jumuah, pp. 159-170.

similar in nature to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's. However, the first one to explicitly spread ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings in Algeria was the historian Abu Rawaas al-Naasiri. He and others from North Africa had met with some of the students of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in Makkah and were convinced of his teachings.

However, it was later when ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings made a much stronger impact, during the first half of the thirteenth Hijri century. Although the French occupiers tried valiantly to fight the presence of Islam, they were not able to put an end to the Hajj, which gave an opportunity for many from Algeria to go to the Hijaz and study ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings.

The most noted and famous of the *salafi* scholars[1] of Algeria was Abdul-Hameed ibn Badees (1305-1359 A.H.). In 1908, he went to complete his studies at the Zaitunah University in Tunis, wherein he was greatly influenced by two *salafi* scholars, Muhammad al-Nakhli (d. 1924 C.E.) and Muhammad al-Taahir ibn Ashoor. These were the two, as ibn Baadees himself stated, who made him realize the difference between Sunnah and heresies. He made the hajj and remained in Madinah for a while, learning from the Salafi scholars there. He returned to Algeria and established the "Organization of Muslim Scholars of Algeria." They sought to correct the beliefs, strive against heresies and open the door to ijtihaad. One of their slogans was, "Islamic beliefs from the Quranic verses and hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)." Bin Baadees was certain that the key to reform was the revival of the correct Islamic beliefs. He stated, "We shall begin with faith, by purifying our beliefs from *shirk*, our behavior from lewdness and our actions from acts contrary [to the Shareeah]."[2] Of course, this pitted him against the Sufis of North Africa, whose practices were contrary to what he was calling for. To make matters worse, the Sufis collaborated with the French in their struggle against the Salafis of North Africa. In the end, though, this organization became very influential in fighting against the French until Algeria gained independence in 1382 A.H.[3]

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[1] That is, scholars calling to the way of the early generations of Muslims.
[2] Quoted in Uwais, p. 23.
[3] For more on the influence of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in Algeria, see Abdul-Haleem Uwais, *Athar Dawah al-Imaam Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab fi al-Fikr al-*

In Morocco, according to the French historian Julian, Sidi Muhammad ibn Abdulllah al-Alawi (1757-1790 C.E.) was very much influenced by the pilgrims returning from Makkah who had studied under the "Wahhabi" scholars. He said about himself, "I am Maliki in my school of fiqh, Wahhabi in my beliefs." He set out to destroy the books having incorrect beliefs and some of the *zaawiyah* (Sufi cloisters). He called the people to ijtihaad and the Sunnah.[1]

Then there was Maula Sulaimaan ibn Muhammad ibn Abdullah (1792-1822 C.E.). Al-Zirikili and many Western references mention that he was greatly influenced by the "Wahhabis" after the year 1225 A.H. (1810 C.E.) and he afterwards opposed the innovations of the various Sufi orders. He was in direct contact with Abdullah ibn Saud and sent delegations to Makkah to make Hajj and study under the scholars there. However, he did not meet with much success in spreading the beliefs of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[2]

In Marakesh, there was also Abu al-Abbaas al-Tijaani who opposed heresies and prevented people from traveling to gravesites. It is said that his followers reached in the hundreds of thousands.[3]

Abu Shuaib al-Dakaali was a great scholar of hadith who lived in Makkah for many years. He returned to North Africa (Morocco) and became the leader of the Salafi teachers for over a quarter of a century.

A very important movement in North Africa was the Sannusi movement, which for obvious reasons is most closely tied to the history of Libya. Muhammad ibn Ali al-Sannusi (b. 1202 A.H./1887 C.E.-d. 1959 C.E.), originally from Algeria, made Hajj in 1829, when Makkah was under the control of the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He might have been somewhat influenced, in that he was able to purify his movement from some of the extreme aspects of the Shaadhili order. He emphasized a return to the Quran and Sunnah and also emphasized the importance of a political structure and military strength. However, there were many ways in which al-Sannusi's

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Islaami al-Islaahi bi-l-Jazaair (Bahrain: Maktabah ibn Taimiyyah, 1985), *passim*.

[1] See al-Husain, p. 425; al-Zuhaili, vol. 2, p. 323; Jumuah, p. 235; Muhammad al-Shuwair, *Tasheeh Khata Tareekhi Haul al-Wahhaabiyyah* (Riyadh: Daar al-Habeeb, 2000), pp. 24-34.

[2] See al-Husain, p. 426; al-Zuhaili, vol. 2, p. 324; Jumuah, pp. 235-237.

[3] Al-Zuhaili, vol. 2, p. 324.

teachings differed greatly from that of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, thus leading many to doubt any influence of the latter upon the former. His movement became so strong that the colonialists in North Africa complained that all of the problems that they were facing with the locals were the result of this movement.[1]

Sub-Saharan Africa

Uthmaan Dan Fodio (b. 1169 A.H./1754 C.E.) was from the Fulani tribe. During his early years, many of his people had yet to embrace Islam in a complete sense. A lot of idolatry still existed; they did not attend to the prayers and fasts; they still drank alcohol; they ran around practically in the nude and so on.[2] At an early age, Uthmaan learned the Quran and Arabic language. While traveling to further pursue his studies, he studied under Shaikh Jibreel ibn Umar in the land of the Tawaariq. Shaikh Jibreel directed his attention to the serious study of the Quran and Sunnah. Previous to that, Shaikh Jibreel had made the pilgrimage and was greatly influenced by the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in Makkah. Uthmaan himself decided to make the Hajj and in the process met with many of the scholars in the Hijaz who were followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. In the Hijaz, he studied the writings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and personally transcribed copies for himself.[3]

After staying one year in the Hijaz, he returned to his homeland and earnestly started his reform movement. He gave lectures, wrote books and became very popular. He fought against common heresies within his tribe. He struggled to remove the final remnants of polytheism, animism and ancestor worship from his area. He spread the correct teachings of the faith. He began his movement with polite admonitions, reminders, ordering good and eradicating evil. As his followers increased in number, he, like ibn Abdul-Wahhaab before him, turned to one of the local authorities to gain political strength. He went to King Nafta, the strongest of the Hausah

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[1] Cf., al-Husain, p. 426; al-Zuhaili, vol. 2, pp. 326-328; Jumuah, pp. 213-219.
[2] Al-Ghunaimi, vol. 2, p. 350.
[3] There are those who deny that Uthmaan visited Hijaz. In any case, though, it is clear that he studied under Shaikh Jibreel who was a follower of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings.

rulers, and explained to him Islam and the principles upon which he wished to work. The two entered into an alliance, although there existed those who opposed Uthmaan. He eventually was able to unite his people under his political authority. He took part in a number of jihads to spread the faith, starting in 1802 A.H. By 1804, he had established the Sultanate of Sokono, a relatively large Islamic empire, that continued after Uthmaan Dan Fodio's death.

Of all the movements that are ascribed as having been influenced by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, Uthmaan Dan Fodio was definitely the closest to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in his teachings and approach, leaving very little doubt that the influence was quite strong. In fact, Uthmaan's brother Abdullah ibn Muhammad explicitly stated that Uthmaan started his movement after returning from the Hajj and leaving the practices of his people that contradicted the Shareeah.[1]

Another famous movement in a nearby region was the Mahdi movement of the Sudan, founded by Muhammad Ahmad ibn Abdullah (b. circa 1260 A.H.-1302 A.H./1885 C.E.). He wished to remove the Sufi orders and the different schools of fiqh and unite everyone around the Quran and Sunnah. He took part in jihad and established a government, attempting to completely free his land from the colonialists. His way of running the government was very similar to the government of al-Diriyyah and the priority he gave to removing the excesses of Sufism was also similar to that of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, leading Hasan Ahmad Mahmood to conclude that there was a clear influence there.[2] Al-Zuhaili, also, concludes that although there were some major differences in the two sets of teachings, the Mahdi's movement was definitely influenced by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings.[3]

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[1] He is quoted in Jumuah, p. 114. For more details concerning Uthmaan Dan Fodio and ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's influence upon him, see Abdul-Fattaah al-Ghunaimi, "*Athar Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab fi Gharb Afreeqiya*" in *Buhooth Nadwah Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab* (Riyadh: Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, 1991), vol. 2, pp. 343-368. Mustafa Masad, "*Athar Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab fi Harakah Uthmaan ibn Faudi al-Islaahiyyah fi Gharb Ifreeqiyaa*" in *Buhooth Nadwah Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab* (Riyadh: Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, 1991), vol. 2, pp. 423-444; Jumuah, pp. 103-116.

[2] Quoted in Jumuah, p. 221.

[3] See al-Zuhaili, vol. 2, pp. 329-331; Jumuah, pp. 221-226.

The Indo-Pak Subcontinent

Al-Sayyid Ahmad ibn Irfaan al-Bareli (1201-1246 A.H.) was from Rae Bareli and originally of the Naqshabandi Sufi order. However, later he became an active *salafi* worker. He was active in seeking knowledge and calling others to the path of Allah. In 1219, after studying in Lucknow, which was ruled by a Shiite leader, he moved to Delhi. In Delhi, he studied under Shah Abdul-Azeez, the eldest son of Shah Waliullah. The Indian scholars at that time were very fond of using philosophy in their religious discussions. It was the school of Shah Waliullah that impressed upon them the study of the Quran, hadith and fiqh to understand their religion. It is said that Al-Sayyid Ahmad performed the pilgrimage in 1236 A.H. (1822 C.E.) and was influenced by the scholars there. He returned and established his own state ruling Kabul and Peshawar, ruling by the Shareeah. In 1826, he declared jihad against the Sikhs and later also fought the British. After more than four years of fighting, he became a martyr (Allah willing) when slain by Sher Singh at Balakot in 1831. His followers remained for some time, setting up authority in Sattana. The British in the Umbeyla War of 1863 C.E finally defeated them.[1] His state then came to an end, although the influence of his movement continued for some time, playing a strong role in the later independence movement.

Al-Bareli's teachings were very close to those of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, stressing *tauheed* and insisting that the state be ruled by the Shareeah. However, there is a difference of opinion as to whether he was truly influenced by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings. Although there is some difference between the teachings of the two leaders, the amount of similarity between them is still great. Hence, many authors, such as Ahmad Ameen, Muhammad Abdullah Maadhi, Abbaas Mahmood al-Aqaad, Abdullah al-Ruwaishid, Muhammad al-Shayaal, Brockelmann and Margoliouth are of the opinion that this movement in India was definitely influenced by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings. On the other hand, there are many who deny any influence. Thus, Abdul-Kareem Uthmaan concludes that this movement was called "Wahhabis" by the British only to try to defeat any renaissance

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[1] Cf., T. P. Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam* (Lahore: Premier Book House, n.d.), p. 661.

Islamic movement and to smear its name. Muhammad Ismaeel al-Nadwi notes that Ahmad and his partner al-Shaheed Ismaael were still greatly influenced by Sufism, precluding a direct and close connection to the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[1]

Nadwi noted that he has seen a great deal of lies and false allegations stated about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Among them he includes the notion that Al-Shaheed Ahmad's movement was like a branch of the Wahhabi teachings in Najd. He states that the sources and goals of the two tendencies are one, being derived from the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. He also noted that both Ahmad and ibn Abdul-Wahhaab were strivers (*mujaahid*) striving for the sake of Allah. But that in itself does not mean that there was ever any relationship between the two. In many ways, he states, that there was no similarity between the two of them even though the foundations for the two calls were the same.[2]

Furthermore, Masood al-Nadwi stated that according to Sulaimaan al-Nadwi both Shah Waliullah of Delhi and ibn Abdul-Wahhaab learned from the same fountain of knowledge in Madinah. Perhaps, Sulaimaan al-Nadwi was trying to imply some commonality between the two. Masood al-Nadwi notes that there is no doubt that they learned at the same "school" (the Prophet's mosque) and that the source of their knowledge (the Quran and Sunnah) was the same, but there is no evidence that they ever learned from any of the same people.[3]

Qeyamuddin Ahmad, in his extensive work on this movement in India, also doubts any strong connection between ibn Abdul-Wahhaab of Najd and those called Wahhabis in India. Both Bareli and ibn Abdul-Wahhaab derived their teachings from the same revelation and there were some commonalties between them but there were also some marked differences between them, such as the influence of Sufi thought on Bareli. Qeyamuddin Ahmad though seems to accept the conclusion that it is difficult to either affirm or deny any true connection between the two calls.[4]

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[1] Cf., Jumuah, pp. 63-81.
[2] Al-Nadwi, p. 20.
[3] Al-Nadwi, p. 40.
[4] Qeyamuddin Ahmad, *The Wahhabi Movement in India* (New Delhi, India: Manohar Publishers, 1994), pp. 31-32.

Another important figure in the Indo-Pak subcontinent who is usually tied into Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was Sideeq Hasan Khan (b. 1307/1890).[1] He lived a long time in Hijaz and Yemen. He was greatly influenced by the thoughts of ibn Taimiyyah and his teacher al-Shaukaani. He was the founder of the *ahl al-hadith* movement in India. According to al-Nadwi, Sideeq Hasan Khan never reached a definitive judgement concerning the "Wahhabis." The closest to the truth that he wrote about them was in *Itihaaf al-Nubalaa*, even though the claim that they unjustifiably declared Muslims disbelievers remained with him.[2] In his footnotes to al-Nadwi's work, Abdul-Aleem al-Bastawi adds a lengthy comment. He notes that Khan lived during 1248-1307. As mentioned earlier, during that time, Najd was overran and the "Wahhabis" were defeated. Lies and falsehood about Najdis was spread throughout the Muslim world, such that it was very difficult for anyone to publicly defend them. Furthermore, the effects of the defeat of the *mujahideen* in Balakot, India in 1246 were still strong. People were still being threatened and punished for following the ways of the Sunnah, such that if one were to say *ameen* aloud in the prayer, he would be severely punished. Sideeq Hasan Khan reached a position of high political authority as well as great scholarship. His enemies, in cahoots with the colonizers, were always looking for some opportunity to attack him. In their eyes, the worst crime he could commit would be to spread the Wahhabi doctrine. Thus, Khan, unlike those who came after him, was never in a position to defend the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. However, his greatest concern was to protect the true monotheists in India, those who were accused of being "Wahhabis", by defending their lives, wealth and honor. Thus, he and others at his time of the *ahli-hadith*[3] spent much of their effort trying to show that these people had no real connection with the people of Najd. In this way, what they said was true because these monotheists in India did not take their beliefs from the scholars of Najd, taking it directly from the Quran and Sunnah.

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[1] For a detailed discussion of Sideeq Hasan Khan and his numerous positive statements about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his teachings, see Abdul-Jaleel, pp. 44-58.

[2] Al-Nadwi, pp. 210-211.

[3] In essence, the *ahli-hadith* of the Indian subcontinent are those who called to a stricter following of the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the way of the early generations of Islam.

Even though such was the case, Khan was able to describe the "Wahhabis" justly. He mentioned them in many of his books and his approach was to mention the claims of the detractors first and then mention the statements of the supporters, thus showing the truth of the matter. Al-Nadwi's statement, alluded to above, that Khan still had some doubts about the "Wahhabis" declaring people unbelievers is an example of this nature. Khan mentions that supposed fact while quoting Muhammad al-Haazimi's criticism of the "Wahhabis" but then Khan follows that up with Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's response to that claim. That is how he was able to express the truth in his difficult times. Otherwise, how can one explain that it was Khan who appointed the author of *Sayaanah al-Insaan* the director of religious studies in his land and gave Ishaaq, the great grandson of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, the permission to narrate his knowledge from him?[1]

There were others, perhaps less famous scholars outside of the Indo-Pak subcontinent, who were followers and supporters of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and were part of what is known as the *ahli-hadeeth* movement. These included Sideeq Hasan Khan's contemporary Basheer al-Deen al-Qanooji (1234-1296 A.H., from the same hometown as Sideeq Hasan Khan), Abdullah al-Ghaznawi (1245-1326 A.H.), Muhammad Basheer al-Sahsawaani, Abdul-Haleem al-Laknawi (1272-1345 A.H., the first to translate *Kitaab al-Tauheed* into Urdu) and numerous others.[2]

There were yet other movements in that area that are said to have been influenced by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. In particular, there were some movements that opposed the British occupation. One of them was al-Faraidi that was established in 1804 C.E. under the leadership of al-Hajj Shareeatullah (1178-1256 A.H.). He was from Bengal. He lived a long time in Makkah, from 1799 to 1818 C.E, during which time the "Wahhabi" movement was gaining strength. His movement was similar in that he fought against heresies and superstitions and took to fighting against the British colonialists. He declared his native land *daar al-harb* ("the land which war is to be declared against") since it was under British rather than Islamic rule. After Shareeatullah's death, Dudhu Miyan led the movement until it was

[1] Al-Bastawi, pp. 211-213.
[2] See Abdul-Jaleel, pp. 59-127.

finally defeated in 1860. Many are the scholars who believe that this movement was definitely influenced by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teaching. Shareeatullah sought to purify Islam from Hindu and extreme Sufi thoughts. He even avoided using Sufi terms, such as Pir ("Shaikh"), and used terms like *muallim* ("teacher") instead.[1]

Al-Zuhaili[2] includes al-Sayyid Ameer Ali of Calcutta as a reformer who was influenced by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He was of a different nature than al-Sayyid Ahmad (above), saying that he relied mostly on education. He wanted to revive the *aqeedah* of the people. According to al-Zuhaili, one of his "great works" was *The Spirit of Islam*, in which he spoke about the evolution and development of religion. It is very possible that the Arabic version of *The Spirit of Islam* is different from its last edition currently available in English. Even a cursory reading of *The Spirit of Islam* would demonstrate that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and al-Sayyid Ameer Ali had very little in common—not to speak of the latter being the result of the influence of the former. Ali's work is full of blasphemous statements that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers would definitely consider pure disbelief. For the sake of brevity, only one quote from Ali's work will be given here. This quote demonstrates that Ali considered the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) the author of the Quran. Ali wrote,

> There is no doubt that in the Suras of the intermediate period before the mind of the Teacher [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)] had attained the full development of religious consciousness and when it was necessary to formulate in language intelligible to the common folk of the desert, the realistic descriptions of heaven and hell, borrowed from the floating fancies of Zoroastrian, Sabean and Talmudical Jew, attract the attention as a side picture and then comes the real essence, the adoration of god in humility and love...[3]

Furthermore, in this same work, Ali writes off the "Wahhabis" as nothing more than the descendents of earlier Khawarij who designate "all other Moslems as unbelievers."[4]

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[1] Jumuah, pp. 82-86.
[2] Al-Zuhaili, vol. 2, p. 321.
[3] Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam* (New York: Humanities Press, 1974), p. 197.
[4] See Ali, pp. 356-357.

In addition, Muhammad al-Saeed Jamaal-al-Deen wrote an article in which he tried to show the influence of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab on Muhammad Iqbal. He says that there is no doubt that Iqbal admired ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his reform efforts. In fact, Iqbal describes ibn Abdul-Wahhaab as, "The great puritan reformer Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhaab." Jamaal-al-Deen then goes on to quote al-Nadwi, as quoted above, that it was very difficult at that time for anyone to openly say that he is a "Wahhabi." He then goes on to argue that Iqbal's concepts of monotheism and *shirk* were very close to those of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He then states, "We cannot say with certainty, even giving all of the evidence we presented, that the thoughts and goals were one between the call of the Shaikh [ibn Abdul-Wahhaab] and the methodology of Iqbal." He says that he cannot make that conclusion because the path of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was not something new and both of them drew from the same sources. But then he concludes that "we cannot say, at the same time, that he was not directly influenced by the movement of [ibn Abdul-Wahhaab]."[1] Al-Zuhaili also includes Iqbaal as having similar thoughts to the "Wahhabis".[2]

It is true that Muhammad Iqbal had some thoughts in agreement with ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and that he also admired ibn Taimiyyah. However, to go from that to insist that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had a great influence on Iqbal's thinking seems a bit far-fetched—and it is similar to the claim that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab greatly influenced Muhammad Abduh or Jamaal al-Deen al-Afghani. Just because an idea or two are in common does not necessarily mean that there is a true influence. One need only read the entire portion that Iqbal wrote about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to see that he did not truly capture the meaning of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's reform. It is true that he admired ibn Abdul-Wahhaab but to admire someone while not truly understanding what the person stood for would probably preclude any true influence. As noted earlier, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was not about "change" or "reform for the sake of reform," he was about bringing

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[1] Muhammad al-Saeed Jamaal-al-Deen, "*Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab wa Asdaauhaa fi Fikr Muhammad Iqbaal*" in *Buhooth Nadwah Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab* (Riyadh: Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, 1991), vol. 2, p. 459.

[2] Al-Zuhaili, vol. 2, p. 322.

Islam back to what Islam was and is supposed to be—the way of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This is what Iqbal wrote,

> But the spirit of ibn Taimiyya's teaching found a fuller expression in a movement of immense potentialities which arose in the eighteenth century from the sands of Najd, described by MacDonald as the "cleanest spot in the decadent world of Islam." It is really the first throb of life in modern Islam. To the inspiration of this movement are traceable, directly or indirectly, nearly all the great modern movements of Muslim Asia and Africa, e.g. the Sennusi movement, the Pan-Islamic movement and the Babi movement, which is only a Persian reflex of Arabian Protestantism. The great puritan reformer, Mohammad ibn Abdul Wahab, who was born in 1700... We are, however, not concerned with the political career of this movement which was terminated by the armies of Mohammad Ali Pasha. The essential thing to note is the spirit of freedom manifested in it: though inwardly this movement, too, is conservative in its own fashion. While it rises in revolt against the finality of schools, and vigorously asserts the right of private judgement, its vision of the past is wholly uncritical, and in matters of law it mainly falls back on the traditions of the Prophet.[1]

This passage probably does not need much comment to show that, at the very least, Iqbal did not understand ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's message: the only true Islam is that of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Thus, admiration may be one thing—even disbelievers admire ibn Abdul-Wahhaab—but it seems very difficult to argue that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab influenced Iqbal when this is the only passage in which Iqbal directly touches upon ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Allah knows best.

Indonesia

In Sumatra, after three individuals returned from the Hajj in 1218 A.H. (1802 C.E.), they started a *Salafi* ("Wahhabi") movement. Their leader was al-Haaj Miskeen. They struggled to reform the ways of the Muslims in Indonesia. They also fought against the Dutch. The Dutch recognized that this movement was a real threat to their

[1] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1977), pp. 152-153.

colonial power and they worked quickly to crush it. Unfortunately, the Dutch were able to take advantage of the internal fighting between the reform-minded *Salafi* Muslims and the Muslims who were content on following the heresies and innovations that had crept into their religion. The movement was finally defeated in 1837 C.E. after sixteen years of struggle. Although many of the leaders of the struggle were martyred during that fighting, their followers continued to spread their message peacefully after that. After that time, the movement was also able to spread to the other Indonesian islands.[1]

On the Island of Java, in the 1910s and 1920s, a number of organizations sprung up propagating, in general, the same teachings as those of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. One of them was lead by al-Haaj Ahmad Dahklaan. He spent some time around 1902 in the Hijaz and was greatly influenced by the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He was the *khateeb* in the Mosque of Sultan in Jakarta and used that position to spread those teachings and to eradicate some of the innovations that had developed on the island. He resigned from his post as *khateeb*[2] and continued to spread the message on his own, until his death in 1923. But his organization, Jameeah Muhammadiyyah, continued to spread to all of the islands. Indeed, it had a branch, mosque, hospital or orphanage in virtually every city of Indonesia. It became the largest *dawah* organization in Indonesia. Another organization, Jameiyyah al-Wahdah al-Islaamiyyah was also very active in carrying the same message. Although lots of negative propaganda was being spread about the "Wahhabis," as some of the Indonesians performed the pilgrimage, they learned the truth about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and therefore the movement continued to spread throughout Indonesia.[3]

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[1] Cf., Arnold, p. 410; al-Zuhaili vol. 2, p. 323; Jumuah, pp. 88-103.

[2] That is, the one who gives the sermons during the Friday Prayers.

[3] For more details about the influence of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in Indonesia, see Najeeh Abdullah, "*Tathar al-Dawaat al-Islaahiyyah fi Andooneesiya bi-Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab*" in *Buhooth Nadwah Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab* (Riyadh: Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, 1991), vol. 2, pp. 391-422; Jumuah, pp. 202-212.

Thailand

In 1919 C.E., a young man from Indonesia, Ahmad Wahhaab, visited the mosques and Muslim communities in Bangkok. He slowly but surely started to preach the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He challenged the resident scholars to support their innovations. He started his own reform movement and published a magazine, *al-Bidaayah*, in which he confronted the heresies and superstitions of the Muslim population. This led to a split in the Muslim community, some following the old ways filled with innovations and others following the new movement following the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. It seems that the friction between the two groups grew quite intense. For many years, this movement was quite strong, publishing numerous books and tracts.

In southern Thailand, a movement independent of the happenings in Bangkok appeared. Although from its earliest moments, the reform ("Wahhabi") movement was under attack as a "new religion" and so on, in the south of Thailand a reform movement began around 1943 C.E. under the leadership of Ismaaeel Ahmad. This was after he had studied at the Nadwat al-Ulamaa in Lucknow, India, under the guidance of Abul Hasan al-Nadwi. The call of his message was exactly the *salafi* call of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[1]

Turkistan

Jumuah writes that an author by the name of Shuyler wrote in a work entitled *Turkistan*, published in London in 1867 C.E., that Ish Muhammad Kul was a Muslim leader against the Russians, attempting to create an Islamic government. He says that this man was a student of a "Wahhabi" preacher.[2] And Allah alone knows best.

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[1] For more details about the influence of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in Thailand, see Ismaaeel Ahmad, "*Tathur al-Dawaat al-Islaahiyyah al-Islaamiyyah fi Tailaand bi-Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab*" in *Buhooth Nadwah Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab* (Riyadh: Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, 1991), vol. 2, pp. 369-390.

[2] Jumuah, p. 227.

Factors Contributing to the Great Influence of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab

As has been alluded to on numerous occasions, the message of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was not a new message. It was a return to the Quran and Sunnah. Hence, his source of inspiration and therefore his thoughts were consistent with many "reformers" who had come before him or after him. Indeed, Uthmaan ibn Ahmad al-Najdi, of Najd, preceded ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in calling people to the true *tauheed* and fighting against *shirk*. He even wrote a book whose title means, "The salvation of the later generations is found in the beliefs of the early generations (*al-salaf*)." He died in 1096 A.H. In fact, just before ibn Abdul-Wahhaab started his call, Muhammad ibn Ismaaeel al-Sanaani was already active in Yemen, fighting against grave worship, veneration of trees and so forth, just like what ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was to call to.[1] However, the influence and the effect of these two scholars—as well as many others in many parts of the world who called to the same fundamental teachings of Islam—cannot compare to that of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Although Allah alone knows all the reasons and causes behind this phenomenon, it is definitely worthwhile to try to pinpoint some of the reasons behind ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's great success.

These factors include:[2]

(1) Allah's blessing and guidance. Allah definitely helps those who support His cause. Allah says,

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ إِن تَنصُرُواْ ٱللَّهَ يَنصُرْكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ

"O you who believe! If you help (in the cause of) Allaah, He will help you, and make your foothold firm" (*Muhammad* 7).

(2) Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's nature and his insistence on purifying his and one's intention. Only Allah knows what is in one's heart and what are one's true intentions. However, what can be said about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab is that his outward behavior and his treatment of people, even his greatest opponents, indicate that he was true to his calling: striving solely for the sake of Allah.

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[1] Cf., Jumuah, pp. 56-57.

[2] In preparing this section, although the discussion is very different, the author benefited from Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 2, pp. 666-683.

(3) The vast knowledge and strength of argumentation of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. In particular, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had a great deal of knowledge concerning the Quran, hadith and statements of the scholars. This made his arguments very difficult to overcome.

(4) The purity of the call—it being the true call, completely consistent with the nature of man, clear and understandable to all, free of sophistry and innovations. This again makes ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's call very difficult to refuse. It is "simple and clear," straightforward from the Quran and Sunnah. When a person believes, as almost every Muslim would, that he has to follow the Quran and Sunnah and this is what he is being presented with, he will, if he has sincerity in his heart, eventually accept such a call.

(5) Political strength and a complete change in the society—leaving the door open for teaching the truth, implementing the truth and eradicating those forces that fight against the truth. Furthermore, people were able to see the true effects of the Shareeah being implemented. The internal fighting, the raids on innocent individuals, the stealing and crime all came to a virtual end when the movement spread and dominated an area. The taxes and injustice from the rulers came to end. The public treasury looked after the needs of the citizens. Even the land between the Hijaz and Najd was free of crime during that era. The beauty of the teachings of Islam, when it is allowed to be truly implemented, has always been one of the greatest ways by which Islam has always spread.

(6) Ruling over Makkah and Madinah for a period of time—the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab were able to rule over Makkah in the years 1217-1226 A.H. This gave them an excellent opportunity to meet and influence Muslims from all over the world. They took full advantage of this great opportunity by giving lectures, holding debates and distributing literature. Thus many people throughout the Muslim world were able to come into direct contact with this call and be directly influenced or convinced by its scholars. They were able to hear and see the teachings implements for themselves, free of the negative propaganda being spread about it. When this door was opened, many eagerly embraced the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

(7) Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab spread his knowledge to many students who in turn were of great quality. Many of them, including his own children, became scholars in their own right.

(8) Taking advantage of the "forms" of media, in particular, the letter writing and the contacts during the pilgrimage when Makkah was under the control of the followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in 1217-1226.

(9) Travels and contact with other lands—especially among the students: After the fall of al-Diriyyah, some of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's descendents were banished to Egypt. Although some were executed, others simply lived as banished citizens, with ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's grandson Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Abdullah even teaching Hanbali school of jurisprudence at al-Azhar.[1] In addition, later descendents and followers also studied and interacted with scholars in Syria and the Indo-Pak subcontinent.

(10) The effect of the opponents who made people turn their attention to the call itself—bad publicity is sometimes still publicity. Indeed, their attacks on the teachings and call also led to the jihad itself which greatly helped spread the teachings.

(11) The results of objective study of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab from peoples of all walks of life, including even Orientalists and travelers.

One might quickly also note some of the factors that prevented him from having an even greater influence throughout the world:

(1) The role of the opponents in propagating negative and false propaganda. These will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Many times, the writings of the opponents would reach a land before the letters, writings or teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab reached that land. Hence, there was already a great bias present.

(2) The long, entrenched ignorance: This is not something that can be eradicated quickly and easily.

(3) The long, entrenched heresies and customs that people had taken as part of the religion: Again, people become accustomed to a way of life and take it as their religion. It becomes very difficult for many to give up, for example, what they saw as the life of their presumably "pious forefathers."

(4) Personal motivations and interests: Recognizing the truth is not always sufficient. There also has to be a desire in one's heart to live by that truth. That desire must overcome many obstacles, as often

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[1] Vassiliev, p. 158.

living by the truth requires sacrifice and possible harm. Living by the truth may also mean giving up the sins and licentious acts that one is performing. Fearing the repercussions, such as loss of wealth, one's job, one's position, one's reputation and indulging in one's desires, can often stand between a person and following what he recognizes as the truth. Similarly, the "powers that be," such as the rulers, deviant Imams and scholars, fear religious revivals that stem from the true source of the faith and that will remove those who are benefiting from the good intentions but ignorance of the masses. Not only do they themselves not submit to the truth but also they use the means at their disposal to discourage or sway others from accepting or following the truth.

Conclusions

It can be stated without a doubt that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had an impact not just on his homeland but on many parts of the Muslim world. At the very least, he instilled in the Muslim mind the correct idea that by going back to the original teachings of Islam, this religion can be revived and blessed by Allah. To this day, in his homeland, one can still feel the influence of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's call to the pure monotheism. As Idris wrote, "And thanks again to the movement, Saudi society, though not an ideal Islamic society, is the one that is more immune than any other Islamic society to the popular forms of *shirk* (the worshipping of other deities besides God) which the founder of the movement condemned."[1]

Indeed, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings—because they reflect the true stance of the Shareeah—still have a role to play today. Vassiliev's words on this point are important. He stated,

> In evaluating the place of the Wahhabi movement in the history of the development of Islam, it may be seen as a precursor of the Muslim reformation, i.e., 'the process of adaptation of the religious, philosophical and legal norms of Islam to the new historical conditions, which began in the middle of the nineteenth century and continue to this day.' The fact that leading Muslim *ulama* considered Wahhabism as a religious trend rather than as an Islamic sect created a favourable precedent for the emergence,

[1] Idris, p. 6.

some decades later, of other reformist groups whose postulates have something in common with those of Wahhabism.[1]

[1] Vassiliev, p. 157.

V
Opponents and Criticisms of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab

The Nature and Importance of Trials and Tribulations

In numerous places in the Quran, Allah has made it clear that the believer should expect that his faith will be tested and tried. For example, Allah has said,

أَحَسِبَ ٱلنَّاسُ أَن يُتْرَكُوٓا۟ أَن يَقُولُوٓا۟ ءَامَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ ۝ وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ ۖ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا۟ وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ ٱلْكَٰذِبِينَ

"Do people think that they will be left alone because they say, 'We believe,' and they will not be tested? And We indeed tested those who were before them. And Allah will certainly make (it) known (the truth of) those who are true, and will certainly make (it) known (the falsehood of) those who are liars" (*al-Ankaboot* 2-3). Allah also said,

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَن تَدْخُلُوا۟ ٱلْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُم مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ خَلَوْا۟ مِن قَبْلِكُم ۖ مَّسَّتْهُمُ ٱلْبَأْسَآءُ وَٱلضَّرَّآءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَ ٱلرَّسُولُ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ مَعَهُۥ مَتَىٰ نَصْرُ ٱللَّهِ ۗ أَلَآ إِنَّ نَصْرَ ٱللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ

"Or think you that you will enter Paradise without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They were afflicted with severe poverty and ailments and were so shaken that even the Messenger and those who believed along with him said, 'When (will come) the Help of Allah?' Yes! Certainly, the Help of Allah is near" (*al-Baqarah* 214).

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself recognized this "natural law" that Allah has established for mankind. He once wrote, "One [scholar] was asked, 'Which is preferred, to be tried and tested or to be established

and given power?' He answered, 'Trials come first and then being established.' Imam al-Shafi'ee, may Allah have mercy on him, was also asked, 'Which is better for a person, that he be established and given power or that he be tested and tried?' He replied, 'There is no establishment for him until he is tested. Allah tried the most resolute of his Messengers. When they displayed patience, he established them.'"[1]

Note that the struggle that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab took part in was one of the greatest of struggles. It is much easier to identify an external opponent and call people to reject or revolt against the outsiders. However, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's struggle was for the most part against people who were Muslims but who had lost the true vision of Islam. Much of what they were doing, no matter how wrong or evil it was, was done under the name of Islam and with the blessings of the "scholars" and rulers. Assuredly the reader can imagine what it would be like for someone to come and say that this way of following Islam that the people are following is not the proper Islam. This is the uphill battle that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had to wage. There was no question that many would try to defend the "status quo" and that they did.

A Note on Methodology

Upon studying the life and teachings of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, one quickly discovers that what has been stated about him is extremely contradicting. Some consider him a great Muslim leader while others declare him the greatest heretic or disbeliever. This then brings up a question of methodology or, in other words, the logical and sound approach to resolving such conflicting views. In the case of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, one finds controversies concerning historical as well as Islamic issues.

The historical issues can be dealt with based on some very basic and obvious principles:

(1) Any claim should have some historical veracity to it. It must be traceable back to the actual events, either via eyewitnesses or known, acceptable transmitters. When taking this step, one immediately finds that many claims have no acceptable basis to them

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 3, *Mukhtasar Zaad al-Maad*, p. 164.

whatsoever. It is unacceptable to believe or base one's views on information that one has not verified. This is a Quranic principle. Thus, after quoting the verse,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ إِن جَآءَكُمۡ فَاسِقُۢ بِنَبَإٖ فَتَبَيَّنُوٓاْ

"O you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with a news, verify it" (*al-Hujuraat* 6), ibn Abdul-Wahhaab noted that if some evil is stated about a person, it is obligatory not to be hasty, without verifying the truth of the matter. He said the important point is "that one is not to be hasty and one should not speak without verifying the matter, for falsehood is widespread."[1]

(2) If (1) does not seem conclusive enough to solve the conflict and the problem seems to be between what is narrated by supporters and what is narrated by opponents, one then may turn to other reports that are apparently from knowledgeable (if possible eyewitnesses), unbiased and objective reporters. However, the following points must also be taken into consideration.

(3) A sign that a reporter or writer is biased and not objective is when he repeatedly makes claims that cannot be substantiated or that controverts established fact. If this occurs often from a source, that source cannot be considered reliable. Any information coming from such a source must, at the very least, be treated in a skeptical fashion, if not outright rejected completely.

(4) A very important point that plays a critical role here is the fact that none of the opponents of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab ever claimed that they possessed or that there exists any statements, writings or literature from Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, his descendants or his followers other than that which is known and widely available. Hence, the analysis of the "Wahhabi" teachings must be based on these known writings and statements. Therefore, it must be admitted that any claim concerning "Wahhabi" teachings or beliefs that contradicts these statements and writings must be rejected as false and untrue. In addition, it is expected that any refutation of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab is filled with quotes from what are authentically ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings (or his son's writings and so on). If claims

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 284.

are made but quotes are never given, it by necessity should ring a bell of caution.

The methodology used when dealing with contradicting views in issues related to Islam should be straightforward. The essential points include:

(1) One would hope that all Muslims would at least agree upon the Quran as an ultimate source of guidance. The Quran itself clearly states the first principle of resolving any conflict. Allah says,

فَإِن تَنَـٰزَعۡتُمۡ فِي شَيۡءٖ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَٱلرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمۡ تُؤۡمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيۡرٞ وَأَحۡسَنُ تَأۡوِيلًا

"If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allah and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination" (*al-Nisaa* 59). In the light of this clear, guiding verse, one would hope that any claims that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab should put forward would be supported by verses from the Quran and hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Similarly, one would hope that any refutation of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would also be replete with verses of the Quran and hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). If that is not the case, then the Quranic method of resolving such arguments would not have been adhered to and the researcher would have to side with the one who is able to support his view with clear and unequivocal texts of the Quran and Sunnah.

(2) Another point that should be accepted by all Muslims is that the Muslim *par excellence* and the absolute, unquestionable example for all others is the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself and only the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Allah says,

لَّقَدۡ كَانَ لَكُمۡ فِي رَسُولِ ٱللَّهِ أُسۡوَةٌ حَسَنَةٞ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرۡجُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلۡيَوۡمَ ٱلۡأٓخِرَ وَذَكَرَ ٱللَّهَ كَثِيرٗا

"Indeed in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much" (*al-Ahzaab* 21).

(3) Matters of worship in particular form a special case wherein one must be guided explicitly by revelation. Allah alone knows how it is that He is to be worshipped. In other words, the question of how Allah is to be worshipped in a way that is pleasing to Him is something that is beyond the scope of human experimentation and reasoning. Hence, one has no other avenue except to rely upon revelation and restrain one's actions and beliefs within the limits of that revelation.

(4) Closely related to the previous point or a corollary of the previous point, then, is that any newly invented act of worship or belief that is not directly substantiated in the Quran or Sunnah is an innovation and heresy and is to be rejected. In other words, such an act cannot be claimed to be a valid expression of worship of Allah. This point is very clear from the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself—and no true Muslim can doubt the veracity of what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said. In one hadith, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

قَإنه من يعش منكُم فَسيرى اختلافًا كَثً ا فَعلَيكُم بِسنتي وسنة الْخلَفَاءِ الراشـدين
الْمهديِ عضوا علَيها بِالنواجِذ وإِياكُم ومحدثَات الْأمورِ فَإِن كُل بِدعة ضلالَةٌ

"Certainly, the one who will live among you will see lots of differences. So stick to my Sunnah and the sunnah ('way') of the right-principled and rightly-guided successors. Bite onto that with your molar teeth. And avoid newly-introduced matters. Verily, every heresy is a going astray."[1] The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said,

من أَحدثَ في أَمرِنا هذَا ما لَيس منه فَهو رد

[1] This hadith is *sahih*. It was recorded, with slightly different wordings, by Ahmad, Abu Daawood, al-Tirmidhi, ibn Hibbaan, ibn Abu Aasim, al-Baihaqi, al-Haakim and a number of others. For details concerning the grading of this hadith, see Zarabozo, *Commentary*, vol. 2, pp. 1044-1046.

"Whoever introduces anything into this matter of ours that is not from it shall have it rejected." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

(5) The generation of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was the best of all generations. They followed the guidance that came to them directly from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself. In turn, the following and the next generations form the best of all generations. This was stated by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said,

خير أُمتي قَرنِي ثُم الذين يلُونهم ثُم الذين يلُونهم

"The best of my Nation are my generation, then the generation that follows it, and then the generation that follows it." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) Hence, ideas, concepts and ways of practicing Islam that are not found among those first generations or that clearly contradict their way of thinking must be, at the very least, doubted as true paths of guidance.

(6) Finally, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was a human being. Hence, he was definitely not infallible. Thus one may conclude on a certain point that his approach or conclusion was wrong. This does not necessarily mean that one now has belittled ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or that he does not consider him a great scholar. This is an important point lost on many of the more zealous followers of many scholars and leaders. As ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself noted, everyone, save for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), is bound to have some of his statements rejected. At the same time, though, finding a mistake on his part does not mean that one is free to insult or attack him. In fact, the most important point was whether his methodology was sound and if on the main issues, the real pillars of his mission, he was strongly supported by the Quran and Sunnah.

The Motivation Behind the Opposition to Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab

(1) As described in Chapter 3, by the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, the Muslims had fallen into a great deal of ignorance and had greatly strayed from the straight path delineated in the Quran and Sunnah. Hence, heresies and idolatrous practices had become commonplace. In fact, these became more than commonplace. They

became the customs and the culture of the people—in fact, they became their religion itself. Thus, as the widely used expression states, "the truth became falsehood, falsehood became truth, heresy became Sunnah and Sunnah became heresy."

When ibn Abdul-Wahhaab came with clear teachings from the Quran and Sunnah, it was very strange for the people and many found it difficult to give up what had become, in essence, their religion and exchange it for what this man was preaching. This can even occur when one has access to the truth. Note how Allah describes the Tribe of Israel when they resorted to the worship of the calf although that worship went against everything that they had been taught previously. Allah describes how deeply the love for that false idol penetrated into their hearts and made them swerve from the straight path. Allah says,

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَـٰقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ ٱلطُّورَ خُذُوا۟ مَآ ءَاتَيْنَـٰكُم بِقُوَّةٍ وَٱسْمَعُوا۟ ۖ قَالُوا۟ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأُشْرِبُوا۟ فِى قُلُوبِهِمُ ٱلْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ ۚ قُلْ بِئْسَمَا يَأْمُرُكُم بِهِۦٓ إِيمَـٰنُكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

"And (remember) when We took your covenant and We raised above you the Mount (saying), 'Hold firmly to what We have given you and hear (Our Word).' They said, 'We have heard and disobeyed.' And their hearts absorbed (the worship of) the calf because of their disbelief. Say: 'Worst indeed is that which your faith enjoins on you if you are believers.'" (*al-Baqarah* 93). What is equally strange is a phenomenon that Allah describes in the Quran: Many people simply desire to worship more than the just one God or, as can be seen in practice, they desire to worship something closer to them or something physical. Thus, Allah says,

وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُم بِٱللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُم مُّشْرِكُونَ

"And most of them believe not in Allah except that they attribute partners unto Him" (*Yoosuf* 106). When someone comes along and opposes this type of popular behavior, which fulfill only the false desires of humans, it is not surprising that he will be opposed, attacked and hated. Indeed, what he will be calling to does nothing but shock

and dismay the common folk. Thus, Allah described the disbelievers at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

وَعَجِبُوٓا۟ أَن جَآءَهُم مُّنذِرٌ مِّنْهُمْ ۖ وَقَالَ ٱلْكَـٰفِرُونَ هَـٰذَا سَـٰحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴿٤﴾ أَجَعَلَ ٱلْـَٔالِهَةَ إِلَـٰهًا وَٰحِدًا ۖ إِنَّ هَـٰذَا لَشَىْءٌ عُجَابٌ ﴿٥﴾

"And they (the Arab pagans) wonder that a warner has come to them from among themselves! And the disbelievers say, 'This is a sorcerer, a liar. Has he made the gods (all) into one God? Truly this is a curious thing'" (*Saad* 4-5). Allah also says,

قَالُوٓا۟ أَجِئْتَنَا لِنَعْبُدَ ٱللَّهَ وَحْدَهُۥ وَنَذَرَ مَا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ ءَابَآؤُنَا ۖ فَأْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَآ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ ٱلصَّـٰدِقِينَ

"They said: 'You have come to us that we should worship Allah Alone and forsake that which our fathers used to worship. So bring us that wherewith you have threatened us if you are of the truthful'" (*al-Araaf* 70).

(2) A great deal of untruth and falsehood was spread concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his teachings—many of it from the "scholars" who, as described in (1) above, were not willing to give up their heresies and idolatrous practices. From its outset, this call had to face a mountain of false claims, evil rumors and harmful propaganda against it. One of the first letters written to scholars outside of Najd, a letter written by ibn Suhaim, was filled with falsehood and harmful claims against ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. For many outside Najd, this was the first and only exposure that they had to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his teachings. Similarly, Dahlan, who was living in Makkah and therefore had access to Muslims from around the world, wrote a number of lies and false accusations against ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. His work was distributed to the pilgrims and spread throughout the world under the auspices of the ruler of Makkah.[1] Thus, even sincere scholars and Muslim individuals may have been duped by these lies and taken a negative stance toward ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

[1] Cf., Ridha, p. 8.

As shall be noted in the following chapter, the same processes are occurring today wherein some of the same lies and falsehood of earlier years is still being spread throughout today's different forms of media. Thus many who have no real clue as to the true teachings and message of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab already have a negative opinion of him due to these false statements spread throughout the Muslim and non-Muslim world. Indeed, many times innocent and objective writers may pass on this falsehood without even realizing that what they are passing on has no basis in truth.[1]

(3) The political circumstances that developed surrounding the call and the teachings also contributed to its opposition. The newborn state in Najd found itself in a situation where it was bound to run into great hostility. Starting with the Tribe of Khalid in al-Ahsaa to the Ottomans in Turkey and the Shareefs of Makkah, there was bound to be a clash sooner or later.[2] Unfortunately for the followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, many people in the Muslim world looked upon the Ottoman rulers as the legal caliphs and therefore any opposition to them would be against the spirit of Islamic Law. Additionally, the Shareefs were, it is claimed, descendents of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and their rule over the Hijaz was recognized by all who came to perform the pilgrimage. Hence, from the outset, those two great beloved and respected opponents were in the hearts and minds of Muslims throughout the world. Any opposition to the Ottomans or Shareefs may be looked

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[1] Sometimes there may be some basis for something but the general conclusion made from it is not true. An example of this nature is what is known in logic as the fallacy of composition, wherein one makes a conclusion about the whole based on evidence related to a part of it. Al-Abdul-Lateef (p. 73) states that some people note the harshness that occurred during a short interval of time on the part of some of the Bedouins who were followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and the state in al-Diriyyah, and they then make the conclusion that such is the description of the call as a whole and of its teacher. Thus, they drive others away from the call by claiming that it is extreme and harsh upon others. Hamood al-Tuwaijiri refuted that claim by noting that the people of Najd and the majority of the Bedouins do not fit that description whatsoever.

[2] Another source of opposition were the petty rulers of the north of Najd. The historian Haafidh Wahbah wrote that, due to their opposition to the family of Saud, the northern Najdis would write to the Turks claiming that the slogan of Saud was, "There is none worthy of worship except Allah and *ma-hadd* is the messenger of Allah," meaning no one is a messenger of Allah. Even though they knew such was not true, they wrote that in order to make the Turks even greater enemies of the family of Saud. See al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 99.

upon as heretical and blasphemous indeed. On the other hand, when the Ottomans and Shareefs recognized the true threat that the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab posed, they used all of their weapons to destroy this new and growing collection of Muslims. Not only did they use military force but they also used propaganda. The leaders and the scholars who were their close friends worked hand and hand to paint the worst picture of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers. Like the power of the media today—many times controlled by governments or by giant corporations—the masses could easily be fooled into believing the lies and claims made against ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers.[1] Thus, for example, numerous religious verdicts were given in Istanbul against the "Wahhabis" and many of the followers and even descendents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab were later brought to Istanbul, paraded around and executed there as people who rebelled against the legitimate role of the Ottomans.[2]

(4) One of the greatest reasons for the opposition to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his *salafi* beliefs based on the Quran and Sunnah was

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[1] This type of process continued in later times. Concerning the Third Saudi State, Muhammad Rasheed Ridha wrote that King Hussein would use the newspaper *al-Qiblah* in his war against the "Wahhabis." In that government publication in the years 1336 and 1337, the King branded the "Wahhabis" with disbelief and with declaring the Muslims as disbelievers. He also claimed that they disrespected the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and so forth. Ridha notes that the entire motivation behind such attacks was political, as the other rulers feared the power of the new state. See al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 74.

[2] The Russian embassy described the killing of Abdullah, the descendant of Saud at the end of the first "Wahhabi" state in Najd in 1818: "Taken prisoner in al-Diriya and brought recently to the capital, the Wahhabi leader, his minister and his imam were beheaded last week. To make more glorious his triumph over the sworn enemies of the cities that are the cradle of Islam, the sultan ordered the *rakab* (the assembly of the topmost persons of the empire) to be convened in the old palace in the capital. Accompanied by a crowd of idlers, the three prisoners were brought in heavy chains… The leader was beheaded in front of the main gate of St. Sophia, the minister at the entrance to the palace and the imam in one of the main markets. Their bodies were displayed with their heads under their arms… and were thrown into the sea three days later. His Majesty ordered that a prayer should be performed throughout the empire to thank heaven for the victory of the sultan's weapons and the annihilation of the sect that had devastated Mecca and Medina and exposed Muslim pilgrims to fear and danger. All insolvent debtors were released from jail… huge sums were distributed at mosques and *madrasas* (religious schools) to thank heaven for its mercy…" Quoted in Vassiliev, p. 155. With such propaganda and such virtual celebrations on the death of "Wahhabi" leaders, it is no surprise that the majority of Turks would think ill of the "Wahhabis."

and continues to be the presence of heretical groups. It is in the interest of these groups to keep people from getting guidance directly from the Quran and Sunnah because that guidance is not compatible with the teachings that they believe in. Hence, one finds the Sufis and the Shiites playing the most active role in trying to refute as well as insult and ridicule Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Al-Abdul-Lateef stated that via his study of the numerous refutations of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, he found that the majority of them came from Sufis and Shiites who openly were defending their own ways of belief as being the truth.[1] Indeed, if one removes grave-worship and the deification of saints and imams, as ibn Abdul-Wahhaab attempted to do, one can truly strike a deathblow to the heresies of the Sufis and Shiites.[2]

In sum, one can say that the majority of the opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab came from one of three extremist groups—that is, truly extremist groups from an Islamic definition of extremism. These three groups were:

Sufis, in particular the Naqshabandis and the Barelwis[3], were and are staunch opponents of the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. In their history, it was particularly the Naqshabandis that the "Wahhabis" ran into. This is because they were both experiencing a growth at the same time. As Abu-Hakima explained it, it was the 18th Century that witnessed "the spread of the revivalist Naqshabandi order and its ideas in the Hijaz, in Syria and in Iraq."[4] These groups are extremists with respect to their treatment and actions toward the pious, especially the deceased among them. Their extremism is even exhibited towards the

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[1] Al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 75.

[2] Al-Abdul-Lateef (p. 75) notes that when the scholars of Madinah in 1344 A.H. gave the religious ruling to tear down the tombs and mausoleums that had been built in Madinah, the Shiites were greatly perturbed. They tried their best to refute that religious ruling. It was via this process that many of them turned their attention to the "Wahhabis" and tried to refute them. Thus came the appearance of writings refuting the "Wahhabis" by the following Shiites: al-Aurdubaadi, Muhammad Husain, Hasan Sadr al-Deen al-Kaadhimi and others.

[3] These are the grave-venerating followers of Ahmad Ridha Khan (1272-1340 A.H.) of India. They call themselves the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* and they still have quite a presence in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. They have been persistent in their hatred and opposition to the "Wahhabis" and *ahl al-Hadith* movements. They consider it impermissible to marry, attend the funerals of or pray behind such "Wahhabis." For more details concerning their attitude towards the Wahhabis, see Abdul-Jaleel, pp. 135-138.

[4] Abu-Hakima p. xvii.

Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and goes clearly against his own admonition, when he said,

لا تطْرونِي كَما أَطْرت النصارى ابن مريم فَإِنما أَنا عبده فَقُولُوا عبد الله ورسولُه

"Do not overly praise me like the Christians overly praised the son of Mary. I am His slave-servant, so say, 'Servant of Allah and His Messenger.'" (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) Furthermore, when one realizes that the Sufis rely more on "mystical experience, visions" than what is actually stated in the Quran and Sunnah, it is not surprising that there is going to be some conflict between them and ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

It is interesting to note that although ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's reputation is that of one who rejects Sufism in its totality[1], in reality, he actually rarely even mentioned or discussed Sufism. In fact, in his study of the leaders of the *Salafi* teachings' views of Sufism, al-Makki covered ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in just four pages. He began his discussion by referring to the thirteen volume collection of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings which, he states, are available for anyone to buy in the marketplace. He said he meticulously read through those volumes page by page and he found no stance, no attack and no refutation of Sufism or any Sufi shaikh from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[2] It seems that Sufism was not very strong in Najd, although ibn Abdul-Wahhaab did mention some people who were following the extreme views of ibn Arabi and ibn al-Faaradhi.[3] He also referred to the readings of *Dalaail al-Khairaat*[4] and *Raudh al-Riyaaheen*, both can be considered Sufi texts.[5] However, and this point must be emphasized, it

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[1] Many examples of such statements could be given. For example, Sirriyeh writes, "The Wahhabi movement affords an exceptional example of a stern and total rejection of Sufism and its organized expression in the orders." Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defence, Rethinking and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World* (Richmond, England: Curzon Press, 1999), p. 22.

[2] Abdul-Hafeedh al-Makki, *Mauqaf Aimmah al-Harakah al-Salafiyyah min al-Tasawwuf wa al-Soofiyyah* (Cairo: Daar al-Salaam, 1988), p. 15.

[3] Cf., Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 189.

[4] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's biggest complaint about this work is that the people treated it with greater respect and admiration than the Quran. See Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 37.

[5] Cf., Abdullah al-Uthaimeen, "*al-Rasaail al-Shakhsiyyah li-l-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab*," in *Buhooth Nadwah Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab* (Riyadh: Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, 1991), vol. 1, pp.102-103.

was the case that the main acts that he criticized as being idolatrous are all Sufi mainstays. Jameelah wrote,

> With unerring clarity of insight, Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab diagnosed the worst malady of contemporary Muslims, their morbid attachment to Tasawwuf or mysticism... The Arabian Shaikh fully understood that the Muslims of his day had become addicted to Sufism as a kind of opiate which lulled them to sleep and deprived them of all vigor and vitality. Thus did the Shaikh conduct his campaign against all the deviations of the mystic way which conflicted with the doctrine of Tauheed or the Unity of God, the most essential element of Islam. He put up a tough fight against all such innovations as saint worship, symbol worship and grave worship. He particularly condemned the prevailing practice—diametrically opposed to the Sunnah of the Prophet—of erecting mosques and mausoleums over graves and ordered them all demolished at once... he was vehemently opposed to such practices as ancestor-worship, seeking aid from those buried in the graves and begging their intercession with God.[1]

Again, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab attacked those actions but he never spoke much about or attacked Sufi individuals or shaikhs. However, the root of their hatred towards him lies with him criticizing, via clear texts of the Quran and Sunnah, the evil practices that they had fallen into.

The Rafidhah and Shiites are another group that have always opposed the "Wahhabis." This group can also be considered "extremist," since they went to an extreme with respect to the person of Ali ibn Abi Taalib, the family of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and their Imams. They consider their Imams, the descendents of Ali, to be infallible. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab credits them with being the first to introduce tomb visitations.

Other groups who oppose ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers were the Asharis and the Maturidis. This author has noticed that there opposition has been much more tempered. Perhaps this is due to them viewing the difference as more of an academic or theoretical issue. Allah knows best.

(5) Colonization of the past and today's globalization. Vassiliev wrote, "According to the British historian W. Hunter, all the governments of British India considered the Wahhabis a source of

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[1] Jameelah, p. 119-120.

permanent danger to the Indian empire. That factor may have encouraged the negative attitude to the Saudi state among British officials of the Indian Civil Service in the nineteenth century."[1] Jameelah, discussing the crushing defeat of the "Wahhabis" at the hands of the Albanian Muhammad Ali Pasha in 1814, wrote:

> Naturally the British government, nervous about an Islamic revival, was delighted to hear what Muhammad Ali and his son, Ibrahim, had done and sent a special delegation from India led by Captain George Forester Sadlier to congratulate them. In 1900 the notorious Christian missionary, Samuel Zweimer wrote: "This Wahhabi movement came to an ignominious end and in the field of politics proved to be nothing but a stunt. The power of the Saudis should now be considered a thing of the past in Arabia."
> However, these pessimistic predictions proved to be false as less than a quarter of a century later...[2]

It is strange how the various disbelievers—and particularly the colonialists of the past—urged people on to the acts of *shirk*. It seems as though they recognized that such deeds were really the "opium of the people" and if they could be kept away from the truth, they could be manipulated. The Tunisian al-Tuhaami Naqrah gives such examples from the French in Tunisia and the British in Egypt.[3] Al-Abood, drawing on the writings of a French historian of Egypt, notes that from the beginning the English and the French both understood the danger of a call that was calling people back to the way of the Quran and Sunnah. Hence, they cooperated in trying to make the other Arabs oppose the influence of these pure teachings.[4] Ateyya Salem wrote,

> Furthermore, there are some people who remember the stay of Dr. Kamil Taweel in Europe in order to present his doctoral thesis. He found some documents exchanged between Napoleon and the Pope concerning the mission and personality of Sheikh Muhammad Bin Abdul Wahhab. These documents demanded action against his

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[1] Vassiliev, p. 156.
[2] Jameelah, pp. 121-2. Also see al-Shuwair, pp. 63-71.
[3] Al-Tuhaami Naqrah, "*Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab wa Dawatuhu ila al-Tauheed,*" in *Buhooth Nadwah Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab*, vol. 1, p. 63-64.
[4] Al-Abood, vol. 2, p. 431.

mission which they considered a threat to their interests in the East.[1]

It seems that many of the political leaders of the West recognize what ibn Abdul-Wahhaab preached as the true teachings of Islam and the West, in particular, has always seen the Muslims as a threat. Hence, they will do anything to keep the true Islam down while promoting and giving as much air time as possible to any other form of Islam, especially Sufism. In particular, the greatest reason for the West's hatred of "Wahhabism" is that "Wahhabism" is the greatest force keeping the Muslims from reinterpreting their faith—actually losing their faith—to make it completely compatible with the Western way of life, capitalization and globalization. True Muslims who believe in the ultimate and timeless authority of the Quran and Sunnah will forever stand up for their rights. They will not forget about social justice or about what Allah asks of them, simply becoming one with the capitalization and exploitation of the world's resources to simply benefit more the rich and harm the poor. Furthermore, they have something to offer the rest of the world: the true teachings of God, as opposed to the nothingness and spiritual emptiness that the materialists have spread.

(6) Personal desires and greed. According to ibn Ghannaam, who lived during the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, there were many who recognized the truth of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's call. They knew the difference between true monotheism (*tauheed*) and associating partners with Allah (*shirk*). However, they refused to submit to the truth. They did not want to give up their prestige and their position among the people. Ibn Ghannaam states that in private meetings they would acknowledge what ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was saying and then in public they would refute it and pretend that they did not recognize it as the truth. They would actually actively work to keep people from the truth. He says that many of the scholars of Najd would go to the Bedouin chiefs and "warn" them from establishing the prayers in their locations and encourage them to continue their evil ways.[2] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself noted that some "scholars" could not join his call

[1] Ateyya Muhammad Salem, "Foreword," in Abdul Aziz bin Baz, *Imam Muhammad Bin Abdul-Wahhab: His Life & Mission* (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997), p. 10.

[2] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, pp. 33-34.

even if they recognized it to be true because then the masses would ask them that if they knew this blatant truth, why was it that they themselves never pointed it out before ibn Abdul-Wahhaab came along. Thus, in order to save their reputations, they could not side with ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[1]

Furthermore, as al-Nadwi points out, there were many people in Makkah and Madinah who lived off of the practices related to the tombs and graves. In 1218 A.H., when the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab took control of Makkah and when they later entered Madinah, these people lost their source of income—an income obviously not sanctioned by the Shareeah. This led many of them to oppose the new "Wahhabis" and spread false claims against them.[2]

Wealth, prestige, honor, fame and popularity are always great trials for human beings. It is truly only the individuals with the correct belief and strong faith that can overcome all of these trials, put Allah first in their hearts and sacrifice for Allah's sake. It is to be expected of those of weak faith and those whose first goal is this world that they will oppose the truth even when they recognize it. And it should not be surprising that people of that nature may resort to any kind of deception and lying to pull others away from the Straight Path.

Closely related to this aspect is the fact that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab put into practice what he taught. It is one thing to preach something and never put out one's hand to stop the wrong that people are doing. This kind of preacher may gain great popularity but, in the long-run, he will probably have no real effect on society. That is why all, including the evildoers, are willing to live and coexist with a person of that nature. However, once one realizes and acts knowing that he has an obligation not just to himself but also to society, the hatred and the opposition begins. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab noted this point clearly when he stated in response to a scholar from Madinah who was asking about the friction between the people of Najd and others, "You have asked about the reason for the difference between us and the people. We do not differ about the laws of Islam regarding the prayer, zakat, fast, pilgrimage and so on, nor concerning any of the forbidden acts. The thing that the people think is good, we think is good and

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[1] See ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's letter in Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 20.

[2] Al-Nadwi, p. 179. Such has been reported by the Egyptian historian al-Jabarti.

what they think is evil, we think is evil. However, we act upon that thing that is good and we hate for the sake of that good and we forbid the evil and we discipline the people accordingly [and that is the cause of the friction]."[1]

(7) Arrogance and envy. It is amazing that to this day people speak about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in a derogatory manner. They speak about him as a crude, uncouth, uncivilized Bedouin and nothing more. This author has personally heard Muslims refer to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in this fashion. The true test of a person's worth is his *taqwa* and his knowledge of Allah. It is not his wealth or his "level of civilization" as judged according to today's Western, secular, disbelieving standards. Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, who merely presented the true teachings of the Quran and Sunnah, is a trial for mankind. Are his teachings going to be loved, supported and followed regardless of where he came from or what his background was, as long as what he taught was consistent with the Quran and Sunnah? If any Muslim should hesitate in answering this question properly, he should recall the behavior of the disbelievers and the trial that Allah put them to. Allah says,

وَكَذَٰلِكَ فَتَنَّا بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لِّيَقُولُوٓا۟ أَهَٰٓؤُلَآءِ مَنَّ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِم مِّنۢ بَيْنِنَآ ۗ أَلَيْسَ ٱللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِٱلشَّٰكِرِينَ

"Thus We have tried some of them with others, that they might say, 'Is it these that Allah has favored from among us?' Does not Allah know best those who are grateful?" (*al-Anaam* 53).

The Opponents and Critics

The opposition began with sometimes a political and sometimes a religious flavor to it. Often though, there was a political and religious alliance opposing ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. This would be expected as each party would have reason to defend its own interests against the call of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Thus, one finds the continual opposition that came from Dahhaam ibn Dawaas[2] in Riyadh, the

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[1] Quoted in Nusair, p. 95.

[2] The actions of the purely political opponents, such as Dahhaam, were discussed in Chapter 2, while presenting the life of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

political leader, accompanied by the refutations of Sulaimaan ibn Suhaim, the *mutawwa* of Riyadh. Similarly, in conjunction with the opposition of the leader of al-Ahsaa, Shaikh Muhammad ibn Afaaliq also sent letters warning the *Ameer* Uthmaan concerning the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

In his introduction to his work on the opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, Abdul-Azeez al-Abdul-Lateef states that he noted how many refutations there are of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in the bibliographies and indices of Arabic libraries. Although these works are filled with falsehood and lies, they have spread throughout the Muslim lands, especially in these days (1990s) where the Sufis, Shiah and Asharis are spreading their beliefs. Unfortunately, during times of ignorance and well-entrenched heresies, such writings have an acceptance among the people.[1]

The first of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's opponents appeared during his lifetime and appeared in his own land of Najd. This is clear from the letters of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, wherein he refers to at least twenty scholars or students of knowledge who had taken positions against him, many of whom he refuted directly. Of these opponents, some, like Abdullah al-Muwais, were opponents from the beginning and continued to be so throughout their lives. Others, like ibn Suhaim, first acknowledged the truth of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's call and then turned against him. Yet others, like Abdullah ibn Isa, were opponents at first and then embraced the call.[2]

In general, the "scholarly" attempts to refute ibn Abdul-Wahhaab were made up of four approaches: (1) writing letters or epistles against ibn Abdul-Wahhaab; (2) debating with his followers and scholars, such as ibn Suhaim's debate with ibn Saalih in the presence of the leaders of the society in Riyadh; (3) contacting scholars outside of Najd to warn them about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and to encourage them to work against him; and (4) circulating books and epistles written by people outside of Najd against ibn Abdul-

[1] Al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 7-8.
[2] Cf., Abdullah al-Uthaimeen, "*al-Rasaail al-Shakhsiyyah li-l-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab*," *Buhooth Asboo al-Shaikh*, vol. 1, pp. 108-109.

Wahhaab, such as when al-Muwais distributed the books of al-Qabbaani and ibn Afaaliq within Najd.[1]

The opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's during his own lifetime include[2]:

(i) Sulaimaan ibn Abdul-Wahaab, the brother of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, was born in al-Uyainah and was a judge in Huraimila. Later he lived in al-Sudair and died in al-Diriyyah in 1208 A.H. He was one of the staunchest opponents of his brother, trying to prove that Muhammad was following views that contradicted those of ibn Taimiyyah and ibn al-Qayyim. He not only tried to convince the people of Huraimila to leave ibn Abdul-Wahhaab but he also sent a book to al-Uyainah in which he tried to show the errors of his brother's way. In particular, it seems that he disagreed with his brother when it came to sacrificing and making oaths for other than Allah. Sulaimaan considered this a minor form of *shirk* that does not take one out of the fold of Islam. He further claimed that ibn Taimiyyah and ibn al-Qayyim were in agreement with his views.[3] There is a difference of opinion concerning whether Sulaimaan eventually gave up his opposition and joined the call of his brother Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Ibn Ghannaam, the earliest chronicler, specifically states that he repented from his previous position and joined his brother in al-Diriyyah.[4] Ibn Bishr simply states that he moved to al-Diriyyah with his family and remained there while receiving a stipend[5], which may or may not be a sign that he had changed his views. There is actually a letter that was supposedly written by Sulaimaan in which he stated that he repented from his earlier views.[6] Al-Bassaam in *Ulamaa Najd* presents logical evidence to show that

[1] Cf., al-Uthaimeen, "*al-Rasaail*," vol. 1, pp. 111-113. See the letter of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 20.

[2] Below are just some of the more important individuals. For a more complete discussion of the opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and the writings against his teachings during his time and afterwards, see al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 30-58.

[3] See al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 41.

[4] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 142. Al-Abood, Abdul-Azeez ibn Baaz, ibn Sahmaan and others are convinced that Sulaimaan did change his ways and completely joined with his brother. See al-Abood, vol. 2, pp. 207-211.

[5] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 120.

[6] The text of that letter may be found in ibn Sahmaan, pp. 57-61; al-Saabiq, pp. 85-87; al-Husain, pp. 406-409.

that letter is false and Sulaimaan actually never changed his position.[1] Muhammad al-Sakaakir, in his Master's thesis, tried to refute al-Bassaam's view. Al-Abdullateef presents even further evidence to show that Sulaimaan never joined Muhammad's followers, finally quoting the hadith,

من بطأ به عمله لم يسرع به نسبه

"Whoever is slowed by his deeds will not be hastened forward by his lineage." (Recorded by Muslim.) He further notes that it is not strange that someone close to the caller himself may disbelieve in his message. The prophets and the companions had close relatives who were staunch enemies of the call. Noah's own son and wife refused to believe in him. In fact, one need only think of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his uncle Abu Lahab as sufficient evidence that a near relative rejecting one's call is not a sign that one is a liar or that one's call is false.[2] In any case, Sulaimaan's continued opposition or his later acceptance of the call does not affect the validity of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings when they are clearly backed by the Quran and Sunnah.

(ii) Sulaimaan ibn Suhaim, the *mutawwa* of Riyadh, and his father Muhammad are described by ibn Ghannaam as the staunchest of opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Sulaimaan wrote to al-Ahsaa, Makkah, Madinah and Basrah to scare people away from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his teachings. He was relentless in his efforts and often given to lies and harsh language. His writings were very deceptive and would often twist the meanings of the Quran and Sunnah.[3] He declared the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to be Khawaarij. In a letter written by Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to the people of al-Qaseem, he wrote, "It has been conveyed to me that the letter of ibn Suhaim has reached you and that some of the people of knowledge there have accepted it and believed it. Allah knows that that man has fabricated

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[1] See Usrah, pp. 88-89.
[2] See al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 41-42. He goes on to mention a number of important scholars, such as Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Hasan, who made no mention of Sulaimaan's changing of his views.
[3] The Arabic text of one of ibn Suhaim's letter and ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's response may be found in Umair, vol. 2, pp. 79-91. A complete English translation of the two letters may be found in al-Huqail, pp. 167-187.

statements [supposedly from me] that I have never said, nor have I even thought of saying them."[1]

(iii) Abdullah ibn Isa al-Muwais was born in Hurmah and was educated in Najd before traveling to al-Shaam. He then returned to Hurmah and became a judge. He was one of the earliest and greatest opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab refuted him in a number of his writings. He died in 1175 A.H.[2]

(iv) Muhammad ibn Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Afaaliq (d. 1164 A.H.) was from al-Ahsaa and also wrote a treatise refuting, "the one who is to revive the religion," meaning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. In this treatise, he posed meaningless questions to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to try to prove that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was not a scholar and simply to ridicule him. For example, he asked ibn Abdul-Wahhaab about *soorah al-Aadiyaat* and what this *soorah* contains of linguistic nuances: how many are there of Shareeah literal words, linguistically literal words, words made literal by usage, general metaphors, specific metaphors, and about twenty other such linguistic concepts. Furthermore, this same ibn Afaaliq wrote to Uthmaan, the Ameer of al-Uyainah, casting doubts upon ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and encouraging him to cease his support of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Ibn Afaaliq claimed that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was holding views concerning *tauheed* that contradicted the views of ibn Taimiyyah and ibn al-Qayyim. Uthmaan sent a reply to ibn Afaaliq, refuting him and restating his support for ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. In return, ibn Afaaliq sent a harsher retort, making false claims about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, and eventually convincing Uthmaan to discontinue his support of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[3]

(v) Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Fairooz, whose family came from Najd, was born in al-Ahsaa in 1142 A.H. and died in 1216 A.H. He had a large number of teachers and students and wrote a number of works. He was very strong in his opposition to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, writing a booklet entitled *al-Risaalah al-Mardhiyyah fi al-Radd ala al-Wahhaabiyyah* ("The pleasing epistle in refutation of the Wahhabis"). Thus he was greatly praised by al-Haddaad, who also wrote a book against ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. One can see how low the enemies of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stoop when one notes that this ibn

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 11.
[2] Cf., Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 283.
[3] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 42-43.

Fairooz actually claimed that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had forgotten that Satan had had sexual intercourse with his mother and she then gave birth to Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[1] Ibn Fairooz's student Abdullah ibn Dawood al-Zubairi (d. 1225) wrote a famous work *al-Sawaaiq al-Ruood fi al-Radd ala ibn al-Saood* refuting ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and Muhammad ibn Saud. This work was highly praised by the opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[2]

(vi) In Iraq, Ahmad ibn Ali al-Basri al-Qabbaani wrote a large book refuting ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, entitled *Fasl al-Khitaab fi Radd Dhalaalaat ibn Abdil-Wahhaab*. This work was in response to the letter of ibn Suhaim, wherein he called for the scholars of Iraq to write a refutation of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[3]

Others include: Abdul-Azeez ibn Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Adwaan (d. 1179 A.H.) wrote a small treatise of some eighty pages in refutation of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[4] Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Suhaim (d. 1175) of al-Majma and Sudair was also an opponent of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab but he was much less harsh in his opposition than others. Murbad ibn Ahmad al-Wuhaibi al-Tameemi was from Huramila and, in his hatred of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, went to Sana in Yemen to spread false reports about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[5] Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul-Lateef was ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teacher in al-Ahsaa but had written a refutation of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab entitled *Saif al-Jihaad li-Mudda'an al-Ijtihaad* ("The Sword of Jihad for the One who Claims *Ijtihaad*").

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[1] He is quoted in al-Nadwi, p. 206. Even though, he took such an unbelievable stance towards ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab spoke of him in kind words. See Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 206.

[2] Al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 44-46. Al-Abdul-Lateef (p. 46) states that due to the great reception that book received among the opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, he tried his best to procure a copy of it but was unable to.

[3] Al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 44.

[4] Al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 38-39.

[5] At least one scholar, al-Bassaam, believes that he was able to change al-Sanaani's views about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, from one of praise to one of dispraise. However, that view seems to be the weaker view and the correct one is that presented in a footnote in the previous chapter. Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 39.

Those who appeared after his lifetime include[1]:

(i) In Hadhramaut, Alawi ibn Ahmad al-Haddaad (d. 1232) wrote two books refuting ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. His works are of great importance for the opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

(ii) In Tunisia, upon receiving the letter of Ameer Abdul-Azeez ibn Muhammad ibn Saud explaining the beliefs of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers, Umar al-Majoob (d. 1222) also wrote a treatise refuting the "Wahhabis".

(iii) In Morocco, after receiving two letters from Saud ibn Abdul-Azeez, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Majeed al-Faasi (d. 1227) wrote an epistle refuting the *salafi* beliefs of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

Some of the more important of the later writers against ibn Abdul-Wahhaab include in chronological order:

(i) Uthmaan ibn Mansoor al-Naasiri (d. 1282) was another strong opponent of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings, writing four books against him. However, it seems that he later repented from his views.[2]

(ii) Dawood ibn Sulaimaan ibn Jarjees al-Baghdaadi al-Naqshabandi was born in Baghdad in 1231 and died therein in 1299 A.H. He traveled to Najd and studied with Abu Butain. Upon his return to Iraq, he wrote books refuting the beliefs of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, in particular trying to show that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab contradicted the teachings of ibn Taimiyyah and ibn al-Qayyim. One work he wrote was entitled *Al-Minha al-Wahabiyah fi Radd al-Wahhaabiyyah*, in which he tries to prove that the deceased are living the same kind of life as the living and they are capable of the same types of acts.[3]

[1] The fact that so many people from so many different parts of the Muslim world thought it important to refute ibn Abdul-Wahhaab is in itself a sign that the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab were spreading and were possibly considered a threat to the status quo, otherwise there would be no need for these scholars in so many different areas to write refutations. As shall be noted below, those who wrote in defense of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also came from all parts of the Muslim world. This casts doubt on the claims of some today (such as Hamid Algar) who say that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings never had any appeal or ever spread except after the oil money poured into Saudi Arabia and they used that money to spread "Wahhabi" propaganda.

[2] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 50.

[3] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 53-54.

(iii) In the Hijaaz, Ahmad ibn Zaini Dahlaan (d. 1304), the *mufti* of the Shafi'ees in Makkah, wrote a number of works in which he attacked ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers, including *Al-Durar al-Saniyyah fi al-Radd ala al-Wahhaabiyyah*. This book has been published several times and also forms part of the work *al-Futoohaat al-Islaamiyyah*. His presence in Makkah gave him an excellent opportunity to spread lies and doubts worldwide concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[1] Dahlaan's works are some of the worst with respect to the fabrications and misconceptions that they spread. Muhammad Rasheed Ridha notes that given Dahlaan's position in Makkah and the availability there of works about the call, it is hard to believe that Dahlaan was not aware of the truth about the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers. He must have simply chosen to write otherwise. He further argues that even if he did not see such writings and he relied simply on what he heard from people, it would have been incumbent upon him to verify those reports and to seek out ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings to see if such reports could possibly have been true.[2]

(iv) Yoosuf al-Nabahaani (d. 1350) became one of the leading opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab during his time. He wrote works criticizing ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, ibn Taimiyyah and others. In particular, he disagreed with their views that one should not pray to and seek help from the deceased.[3]

(v) The Shiite Muhsin al-Ameen al-Aamili (d. 1371) of Iraq wrote a work refuting ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

(vi) Al-Abdul-Lateef notes that perhaps the greatest enemy of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab today is the Naqshabandi Sufi of Istanbul, Huseyin Hilmi ibn Said Isik (b. 1905 C.E.). He runs a publishing

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[1] Some people believe that Dahlaan may have been a Shiite but he hid his beliefs and claimed to be a Shafi'ee. One must be careful about such claims as one may end up following the same path that the opponents did with respect to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab: making claims based on mere suppositions and conclusions about a person's intent. In any case, what is known about Dahlaan is that he wrote a treatise claiming to prove that Abu Taalib, the Prophet's uncle, will be saved and in Paradise. This treatise is one of the reasons why he was accused of being a Shiite, as Abu Taalib, Ali's father, is very dear to the Shiites. Cf., al-Saabiq, p. 56.

[2] Ridha, p. 9.

[3] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 55-56.

company and distributes books in many different language against Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and the *salafi* beliefs.[1]

In addition to the staunch opponents and those who have written refutations of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, there have been a number of scholars who in passing have written short passages about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers. Most likely, these authors did not truly study the issue in detail and were simply relying upon misinformation that was available to them. However, even this type of misinformation in passing can have a very damaging effect, as shall be noted below. Al-Abdul-Lateef mentions a large number of such works. Works of this nature include ibn Abideen in *Haashiyah*, al-Saawi's notes to the Quranic commentary by "the two Jalaals,"[2] Muhammad Labeeb al-Batnooni's *al-Rihlah al-Hijaaziyyah,*[3] Muhammad Abu Zahrah's *Tareekh al-Madhaahib al-Islaamiyyah,*[4] Muhammad al-Bahi[5] and other works. Al-Abdul-Lateef also notes that

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[1] Some of Isik's works have been translated into English, such as *Advice for the Wahhabi* and *The Religion Reformers in Islam*.

[2] In this work, al-Saawi refers to the Wahhabis as Khawaarij.

[3] In this work, the author claimed that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was trying to spread new beliefs among the Muslims and went to an extreme.

[4] Muhammad Abu Zahrah was a well-known legal theorist and jurist of 20th Century Egypt. He discussed the "Wahhabis" in two of his works. In one of them, on the history of the schools of thought in Islam, *Tareekh al-Madhaahib al-Islaamiyyah*, he includes the "Wahhabis" in his section on recent or new schools of belief. In this category he discusses the "Wahhabis," Bahais and Qadianis. In this work, he considers the "Wahhabis" as completely distinct from the *Salafi* movement. He also discusses them in his work on ibn Taimiyyah, considering them to be the followers of ibn Taimiyyah. In both of these works, he uses very harsh words for his description of the "Wahhabis" and he simply stresses their behavior with others. Saalih al-Fauzaan has taken issue with many of the statements Abu Zahrah made and has written a response to him. Cf., Muhammad Abu Zahra, *Tareekh al-Madhaahib al-Islaamiyyah fi al-Siyaasah wa al-Aqaaid wa Tareekh al-Madhaahib al-Fiqhiyyah* (Cairo: Daar al-Fikr al-Arabi, n.d.), pp. 199-201; Muhammad Abu Zahrah, *Ibn Taimiyyah: Hayaatuhu wa Asruhu wa Araauhu wa Fiqhuhu* (Cairo: Daar al-Fikr al-Arabi, n.d.), pp. 529-531; Saalih al-Fauzaan, "*Radd Auhaam Abi Zahrah fi Haqq Shaikh al-Islaam ibn Taimiyyah wa Shaikh al-Islaam Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab*," *Majallah al-Bahooth al-Islaamiyyah* (No. 42, Rabi al-Awal 1409), pp. 137-149.

[5] Cf., Muhammad Khaleel Haraas, *al-Harakah al-Wahhabiyyah: Radd ala Maqaal li-l-Diktoor Muhammad al-Bahi fi Naqd al-Wahhaabiyyah* (Madinah: Islamic University, 1396 A.H.), *passim*.

some of the encyclopedias available in Arabic have incorrect information about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[1]

The case of ibn Abideen deserves more attention. In his widely accepted book of Hanafi fiqh, usually referred to as *Haashiyah ibn Abideen*, he wrote, while speaking about the Khawarji being those who declare the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to be disbelievers,

> [Declaring the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) disbelievers is not a necessary condition for a person to be considered one of the Khawarij.] Their belief that those who oppose them are all disbelievers is sufficient. Such has occurred in our times with the followers of Abdul-Wahhaab who came from Najd and took control of the two inviolable places [Makkah and Madinah] and adopted the Hanbali school of fiqh. However, they believed that they were the Muslims and those who opposed their beliefs were polytheists. Due to that, they permitted the killing of the *ahl al-Sunnah* and their scholars. Allah finally destroyed their power and ruined their lands and gave victory to the armies of the Muslims in 1233 A.H.[2]

It should be noted that ibn Abideen did not even get the name of the "founder" of the call correct. It was, obviously, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and not Abdul-Wahhaab. Furthermore, his claims about them are not true, as shall be discussed later, and the Muslim army that he mentions is the same army of Muhammad Ali Pasha that was described earlier, an army that was unfamiliar with prayer at best.

Unfortunately, due to the status of ibn Abideen as one of the last great Hanafi scholars, this seemingly insignificant passage in a 12-volume work greatly affected how others viewed Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. In particular, the Hanafi/Deobandi scholars in the Indo-Pak subcontinent wholeheartedly accepted and believed what ibn Abideen stated. Thus, for

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[1] In particular, he notes Muhammad Fareed Wajdi's *Daairah al-Maarif al-Qarn al-Ishreen* and Muhammad Shafeeq Gharbaal's *al-Mausooah al-Arabiyyah al-Maisirah*. See al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 9.

[2] Muhammad Ameen ibn Abideen, *Haashiyah ibn Abideen: Radd al-Muhtaar ala al-Durr al-Mukhtaar Sharh Tanweer al-Absaar* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1994), vol. 6, p. 413. The cover of this edition states, "*Diraasah wa tahqeeq wa taleeq*" ("study, editing and comments") by Adil Ahmad Abdul-Mujood and Ali Muhammad Muawwadh. These two did not bother to correct the name from Abdul-Wahhaab to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab nor did they correct the statement made. This may demonstrate that either the ignorance about Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab may still be widespread or the desire to continue to defame him still abounds.

example, when Shaikh Khaleel Ahmad al-Suhaarnfoori[1] was asked about Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab the Najdi and his followers, he replied that they are to be treated the same as the Khawarij. Then he quoted the same passage above from al-Shaami, that is ibn Abideen, in his *Haashiyah*.[2] Similarly, Muhammad al-Taanuwi, in his commentary to *Sunan al-Nasaa`ee*, commenting on the hadith concerning the appearance of the Khawarij, quoted the entire passage above from ibn Abideen, stating that the followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and those in India known as the "Wahhabis" are nothing but Khawarij.[3] Husain Ahmad al-Madani[4] made the same conclusion relying virtually completely on ibn Abideen's statement.[5] Another scholar who relied on ibn Abideen's statement was Shaikh Rasheed Ahmad al-Kankoohi.[6]

Much of this backlash is the result of a seemingly harmless short passage in a Hanafi book of jurisprudence. This devastating result points to the importance of a Muslim scholar being academically rigorous about everything that he writes or says. He must be fair, he must research and he must weigh heavily every word he says. One small passage may have long reaching effects while the author himself may have thought it not very significant and thus may have simply relied upon what he heard others say without verifying the matter for himself. Perhaps every scholar, researcher and speaker must keep in mind the hadith that may very well apply here:

إن الْعبد لَيتكلم بِالْكَلمة من سخط الله لا يلْقي لَها بالاً يهوي بِها في جهنم

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[1] He was a scholar of hadith who taught at Deoband and Mazaahir al-Uloom. He authored a lengthy commentary on *Sunan Abi Dawood*. He died in Madinah in 1346 A.H.

[2] See the entire response from al-Suhaaranfoori in Sayid Taalib-ur-Rahmaan, *Al-Diywabandiyyah: Tareefuha wa Aqaaiduha* (Karachi, Pakistan: Dar al-Kitaab wa al-Sunnah, 1995), pp. 247-248. Also see Abdul-Jaleel, p. 189.

[3] See Abdul-Jaleel, p. 229; Taalib-ur-Rahmaan, pp. 251-252.

[4] Al-Madani was the leading scholar of hadith among the Deobandis after Anwar Shah al-Kashmeeri. He took an active role in freeing India from the British. He died in 1957. See Abdul-Jaleel, p. 144. For a complete discussion of his attitude towards the teachings of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, see Abdul-Jaleel, pp. 144-184.

[5] See Abdul-Jaleel, p. 170, 172, 177,178 and 179; Taalib-ur-Rahmaan,pp.252-257.

[6] He was the director of the University of Deoband and wrote a large number of books. He died in 1323 A.H. His reliance on ibn Abideen is noted in Abdul-Jaleel, p. 225. The opposition to the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab reached such proportions in India that in 1926 C.E. a conference was convened in which a declaration was made against King Abdul-Aziz and a telegram was sent to the British government to ask them on behalf of the Muslims of India to use their military and political power against King Abdul-Aziz in the Hijaz. See Abdul-Jaleel, p. 28.

"A slave [human] may utter a word which displeases Allah while not thinking of its gravity and because of it he will be thrown into the Hell-fire." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) Another hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari* states,

إِن الْعبد لَيتكَلم بِالْكَلمة ما يتبين فيها يزِل بِها في النارِ أَبعد مما بين الْمشرقِ

"A human may utter a word without thinking it is right or wrong and because of that he may descend in the Fire as distance like that between the East."

(Another interesting but similarly devastating misunderstanding or lack of scholarly research occurred in North and sub-Saharan Africa. In the Second Hijri Century there was an Abaadhi Kharijite movement in North Africa. They were known as the "Wahhabis," after their leader Abdul-Wahhaab ibn Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Rustum. Muhammad al-Shuwair was visiting Mauritania in 1408 A.H., about fifteen years ago, and he met with Muslim leaders there who said they like the Saudis but they wish they would give up the "Wahhabi" school that divides the Muslims. Upon asking them what their source for their views was, they referred to rulings given by scholars of North Africa, such as al-Wanshireesi, who lived long before Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Al-Shuwair had to explain to them that those "Wahhabis" had nothing to do with the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[1])

Works Refuting the Critics

In the face of the onslaught against the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, scholars from various parts of the Muslim world defended ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his teachings. Obviously, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself and his own students first took up the cause and defended the teachings.[2]

Of later scholars whose works are of extreme benefit are:

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[1] Al-Shuwair wrote a book about his experience in Africa. He also discusses (pp. 96ff) whether or not the colonialists fostered this idea that the new "Wahhabis" were the old "Wahhabis". See al-Shuwair, *passim*.

[2] For a discussion of some of those students, see al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 59-61. Similarly, for a discussion of more works defending ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his teachings, see al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 59-69.

(1) *Tasees al-Taqdees fi al-Radd ala ibn Jarjees* by Abdullah ibn Abdul-Rahmaan Abu Butain of Najd (1194-1282 A.H.), a work refuting ibn Jarjees. (This work was published only once, in Egypt in 1344 A.H.)

(2) Minhaaj al-Tasees wa al-Taqdees fi al-Radd ala Daawud ibn Jarjees, another work refuting ibn Jarjees, by Abdul-Lateef ibn Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab of al-Diriyyah (1225-1293 A.H.). (This work was published twice, once in Bombay in 1309 A.H. and once in Cairo in 1366 A.H.)

(3) Sulaimaan ibn Sahmaan (1266-1349 A.H.) was a prolific writer and author. He wrote several individual works in refutation of al-Hadaad, Mukhtar Ahmad al-Muayyad, Jameel al-Zahaawi and others.

(4) Muhammad ibn Naasir al-Haazimi from Yemen (d. 1283 A.H.).[1]

(5) Muhammad Basheer ibn Muhammad al-Sahsawaani from India (1250-1326 A.H.). He was a scholar from India who went to Makkah and met with and debated Dahlaan. Later he wrote a large volume refuting the false claims and misinterpretations of Dahlaan, entitled *Sayaanah al-Insaan an Waswasah al-Shaikh Dahlaan*.

(6) *Al-Haqq al-Mubeen fi al-Radd ala al-Lahaabiyyah al-Mubtadieen* by Abdul-Kareem ibn Fakhr al-Deen from India, who lived during the time of ibn Sahmaan. This work is a refutation of Dahlaan.

(7) Mahmood Shukri al-Aloosi (1273-1342 A.H.) of Iraq wrote a large two-volume work refuting al-Nabahaani, *Ghaayah al-Amaani fi al-Radd ala al-Nabahaani*. He also completed Abdul-Lateef's refutation of ibn Jarjees.

(8) *Al-Sayyib al-Hitaal fi Kashf Shibh ibn Kamaal* by Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Katlaani, a work in which the author defends ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and shows that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's beliefs are the correct beliefs of Islam.

(9) *Eeqaadh al-Wisnaan fi Bayaan al-Khilal aladhee fee Sulh al-Ikhwaan*, a refutation of ibn Jarjees by Muhammad ibn Naasir al-

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[1] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 14.

Tuhaami, a student of the Yemeni scholar Muhammad ibn Ali al-Shaukaani.[1]

(10) The Egyptian Muhammad Rasheed Ridha (d. 1354 A.H.) wrote a number of articles in defense of the teachings of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in his well-known magazine *al-Manaar*. In addition, he had a number of the works of the scholars of Najd published together in one anthology.

(11) In the magazine *al-Muqtataf*, Saalih ibn Dakheel al-Jarullaah wrote an article refuting the views of the missionary Samuel Zweimer concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and the "Wahhabis." In this article, the author states that there is much confusion about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. However, he himself met with many of the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in Syria, Egypt and Iraq in 1318 A.H. and he found himself in complete agreement with their beliefs that are firmly based on the Quran and Sunnah.[2]

(12) *Al-Qaul al-Sadeed fi Qama al-Hiraazi al-Aneed* by Mahmood Shuwail (1302-1372 A.H.) of Madinah. This work is a refutation of a work by the Sudanese Muhammad al-Bakri Abu Hiraaz.[3]

(13) Fauzaan al-Saabiq (d. 1373 A.H.) was originally from the Tribes of Dawaasir. He moved to Najd and studied with Abdul-Lateef ibn Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He then went to India and studied with Sideeq Hasan Khan. After which, he fought in the army of Abdul-Azeez al-Saud. King Abdul-Azeez then sent him as his envoy to Damascus, where he met and studied with al-Qaasimi, al-Bitaar and others.[4] He moved from there to Cairo where he met and studied with Muhammad Rasheed Ridha and others.[5] He wrote a work entitled *al-Bayaan al-Ishhaar li-Kashf Zigh al-Mulhid al-Haaj Mukhtaar*, in which he refuted the attacks of one Haaj Mukhtaar on the "Wahhabis."

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[1] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 26.
[2] See al-Abdul-Lateef, pp.. 26-27.
[3] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 27.
[4] Al-Saabiq, coming from Najd, writes that in Damascus in 1329 A.H., he met with some "scholars" who attacked the people of Najd and their beliefs, calling them "Wahhabis," "fifth school" and extremists. It is amazing how, and this continues today, the opponents of "Wahhabism" will call someone a "Wahhabi" and will define for the person what he believes and thinks, without even asking him if this is truly what he believes or thinks. Cf., al-Saabiq, p. 13.
[5] See al-Bassaam, vol. 5, pp. 378-383.

Many recent works have also been written in defense of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, however the classic works mentioned above were the most detailed in refuting specific books and treatises written against Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[1]

It is important to note, as was alluded to in the introductory chapter, that the attacks on Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his teachings are actually not simply attacks on his person or his "school of thought." In reality, they are attacks on the pure, unadulterated religion and beliefs of Islam—the religion of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself and his Companions. Hence, the scholars who refuted those attacks were actually defending the true beliefs of the *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamaah*[2]. Thus, the issue is one of much greater importance than the defense of a Muslim individual who has been badly maligned. Indeed, it is the defense of the true Islam itself. (Such was true at the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and such is even more so the case nowadays wherein the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and the so-called "Wahhabis" are once again under attack.)

An Overview of the Criticisms and Allegations Made Against ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, His Teachings and His Call

It is not feasible in one chapter of a book to discuss, critique or refute all of the claims and allegations made against ibn Abdul-

[1] Among the more recent works, this author greatly benefited from Abdul-Azeez al-Abdul-Lateef's *Daawaa al-Munawieen li-Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab: Ardh wa Naqd*. However, other recommended articles include Abdul-Rahmaan Umairah, "*al-Shubhuhaat allati Utheerat Haul Dawah al-Shaikh al-Imaam ibn Abdil-Wahhaab*," Abdul-Kareem al-Khateeb, "*al-Shubuhaat allati Utheerat Haul Dawah al-Imaam Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab wa al-Radd alaihaa*," and Muhammad Yoosuf, "*al-Shubuhaat allati Utheerat Haul Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab wa Mamaathaltuha bi-Shubuhaat Haul Dawah al-Shaikh al-Maudoodi*." These are all available in volume 2 of *Buhooth Nadwah Dawah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab* (Riyadh: Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, 1991). In particular, al-Khateeb (vol. 2, pp. 182-211) has a detailed refutation of Dahlaan's work. One should also see Saalih al-Fauzaan, "*Taqeebaat ala ma Dhakarahu al-Ustaadh Abdul-Kareem al-Khateeb fi Kitaabihi al-Dawah al-Wahhaabiyyah wa Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab*," [*Majallah*] *Kulliyah Usool al-Deen* (Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, Vol. 1, 1397-1398 A.H.), pp. 67-87.

[2] That is, the people who follow the way of the sunnah and the original community of Islam.

Wahhaab and his teachings. One of the more comprehensive works available on this topic is al-Abdul-Lateef's *Da'aawa al-Munawi`een li-Da'wah al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab: Ardh wa Naqd*. The topics that he discusses provide a good overview of the types of allegations and criticisms made.[1] Al-Abdul-Lateef touches upon the following topics in detail:

I. **Blatant fabrications concerning the call of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab**

A. The claim that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab claimed prophethood and belittled the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

B. The claim that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab propagated anthropomorphism.[2]

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[1] Another good but brief presentation of the points concerning which ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his opponents differed is found in al-Ajilaan, pp. 132-161.

[2] For a refutation of the allegation that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was an anthropomorphist, see ibn Sahmaan, pp. 214-277. In Chapter 3, some of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's beliefs concerning the names and attributes were given. In sum, he never attributes any of the attributes of human beings to Allah, which is anthropomorphism. Instead, he attributes to Allah whatever Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) have attributed to Him. This would include such things as Allah's hand but the hand of Allah is completely different in its nature than that of human beings, as it is a hand that is befitting His majesty and greatness. This view of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab is actually the view of the early and leading scholars throughout the history of Islam. Only later schools ever deviated from this approach. Al-Arnaaoot wrote in the introduction to Zain al-Deen al-Maqdisi's *Aqaweel al-Thiqaat fi Taweel al-Asma wa al-Sifaat wa al-Ayaat al-Muhkimaat wa al-Mushtabihaat*, a book that quotes the earliest scholars to prove that the view of the attributes of Allah which is known as the *salafi* view is the correct view according to the Quran and sunnah, "I am certain that the one who reads this book [al-Maqdisi's book] attentively and sincerely will have his heart and mind filled with the conviction of the correctness of the approach of the *salaf* concerning the attributes of Allah. It is the best, strongest and most guided approach. He [the reader] will reject, with pleasure and conviction, what has been written in the books of the later scholars that the approach of the *salaf* is safer but the approach of the later scholars is wiser and more intelligent. [The reader] will clearly state that the view [of the later scholars] is incorrect and goes against the guidance of the Sunnah and the Book. The correct statement based on the Prophetic Sunnah and Book of Allah is that the way of the *salaf* is more intelligent, wisest and safest." Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, introduction to Zain al-Deen al-Maqdisi, *Aqaweel al-Thiqaat fi Taweel al-Asma wa al-Sifaat wa al-Ayaat al-Muhkamaat wa al-Mushtabihaat* (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risaalah, 1985), p. 8. One of the earliest examples of a person asking about these attributes and seeking an explanation for them comes from the time of Malik. A man came to him and said, "O Abu Abdullah [Imam Malik], [about the verse,] 'Allah rose over the Throne,' how is this rising?" Malik's reply was, "The modality of His act is not known. But His rising over the Throne is not

C. The claim that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab denied the attribution of miracles to the pious people.[1]

II. **Misconceptions concerning** the call of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab which require an understanding to see what is the correct nature of what ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was calling to and how the opponents tried to distort it[2]

A. Issues related to declaring others non-Muslims and fighting against them.

i. Fabrications against ibn Abdul-Wahhaab concerning his declaring Muslims to be non-Muslims.

ii. Claims that the "Wahhabis" are Khawaarij, that the horns of Satan rise from Najd and so on.

iii. Claims that the "Wahhabis" included among the acts that negate Islam aspects that none before them included.

iv. Claims that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab contradicted the teachings of ibn Taimiyyah and ibn al-Qayyim on the questioning of declaring a person a disbeliever.[3]

v. The claim that polytheism (*shirk*) will never appear in this Muslim Nation.[4]

vi. The claim that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab applies the verses referring to the polytheists upon the Muslims.[1]

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unknown. Belief in it is obligatory. Asking about it is an innovation. And I suspect that you are a heretic." This narration from Malik, with various wordings, can be found in numerous works. For a discussion of its chains and meanings, see Jamaal Baadi, *Al-Athaar al-Waarada an Aimmat al-Sunnah fi Abwaab al-Itiqaad* (Riyadh: Dar al-Watan, 1416 A.H.) vol. 1, pp. 226-231.

[1] This issue was and is of great importance to Sufis and others who believe in the miracles of the pious and "saints" during their lifetimes and after their lifetimes. It is confirmed in the Quran and Sunnah that such things can occur, as Allah has power over all things. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stated his belief concerning this topic, "I affirm the miracles of the pious and what they have of seeing truths. However, that does not give them the right to any of Allah's rights. Furthermore, no deed that is only in Allah's ability should be sought from them." (Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, pp. 10-11.) It is those last two points that he explicitly included, which are also clear from the Quran and Sunnah, that caused the commotion concerning his beliefs.

[2] As Abdul-Lateef (p. 157) explains, this category lies between being a pure fabrication and a case of misrepresenting facts or making erroneous conclusions.

[3] This topic will not be discussed here. The interested reader may consult al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 207-218.

[4] This claim shall be discussed in the following chapter.

vii. The claim that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab revolted against the Ottoman rulers.

B. The prohibition of *al-tawassul* (seeking a means of approach to Allah).

C. The prohibition of seeking intercession via the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

III. **Objections to some of the issues related to the call**.

A. The destruction of tombs and mausoleums as well as the prohibition of traveling to them.

B. Dividing *tauheed* into *tauheed al-ruboobiyyah* and *tauheed al-uloohiyyah*.[2]

C. The rejection of supplicating to the deceased.

In addition to those mentioned and discussed by al-Abdul-Lateef, there were other allegations made against ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. For example, it was claimed that he belittled the four Imams of the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence,[3] that he proclaimed the door to *ijtihaad* open and proclaimed himself an absolute *mujtahid*.[4] Perhaps what was covered in Chapter 3 is sufficient to refute these types of claims. It was also said that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab interpreted the Quran according to his opinion and that he and his followers would adhere only to the hadith that were consistent with their own views. Al-Hadaad Alawi also claimed that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab did not believe in hadith but believed only in the Quran.[5] It was also claimed that ibn

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[1] This topic will not be discussed here. The interested reader may consult al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 227-232.

[2] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's views on this issue were presented in Chapter 3. Concerning his critics on this point, the interested reader may consult al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 328-346.

[3] See Yoosuf, vol. 2, p. 273-276.

[4] His brother Sulaimaan, the Shiite al-Amali, Dahlaan, Alawi Hadaad and others voiced opposition due to these points. See Nusair, p. 72. Also see Umairah, vol. 2, pp. 57-60.

[5] See al-Nadwi, p. 208. Al-Nadwi notes that even in the 20th Century, Abdullah Yusuf Ali (of the translation of the Quran fame) made the same claim that the "Wahhabis" do not take hadith. Even the missionary T.P. Hughes knew better than that, writing, "Wahhabism has sometimes been designated the Protestantism of Islam, and so it really is, although with this remarkable difference, that whilst Christian Protestantism is the assertion of the paramount authority of sacred scripture to the rejection of traditional teachings, Wahhabism is the assertion of the paramount authority of the Quran with the Traditions [that is, hadith]." See T. P. Hughes, p. 661.

Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers detested saying prayers for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).[1]

Due to space considerations, in this work, some of the above topics will be discussed in some detail, others will be discussed briefly and others will not be discussed beyond the few points already made.

The Allegation that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab Claimed Prophethood

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote, "I believe that our prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the seal of the prophets and messengers. A person's faith is not sound until he believes in his being a messenger and testifies to his prophethood."[2] He also wrote, "The greatest [of rights upon a Muslim] are the rights of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Your testimony of faith requires you to give him the position of Messenger of Allah and seal of the prophets. You should know that if you were to raise any of the Companions to the position of prophet, you would become a disbeliever."[3] This belief is very clear throughout his writings and the writings of his descendents, students and followers. No one could rationally claim anything else concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[4]

Yet this very example shows the extent to which the enemies of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would and do go. Some of them go beyond all acceptable limits of logic as well as scholarly integrity. Some of them have no qualms in saying things about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab that have no basis in reality and which cannot be proven by any means—save a supposed revelation from God.

Ibn Afaaliq stated that Musailamah claimed prophethood by his tongue while ibn Abdul-Wahhaab claimed it by his situation and actions. Al-Qabbaani made the same type of allegation. Al-Haddaad wrote, "He would hide the claim to prophethood. Its signs would become apparent through the 'tongue' of his state rather than the tongue of his words. This is attested to by what the scholars stated:

[1] See Umair, vol. 2, pp. 68-74.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 10.
[3] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 81.
[4] For more details, see al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 78-81.

that at the beginning Abdul-Wahhaab[1] was passionately fond of reading about those who falsely claimed prophethood, such as the liar Musailamah, Sajaah, al-Aswad al-Ansi, Tulaihah al-Asadi and their likes."[2] Dahlaan mentioned the same claim in his *Khulaasah al-Kalaam* and *al-Durar al-Sanniyyah fi al-Radd ala al-Wahaabiyyah*, stating, "It is apparent from Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's state that he was to claim prophethood. However, he did not have the ability to state that openly."[3] Many others also made this claim.[4]

The first issue, of course, is if this is something that he hid in his heart, how can anyone make such a claim about him, unless, of course, one claims knowledge of the unseen or claims to be a prophet himself? Indeed, this claim completely casts doubt upon the one who is making such a claim. Furthermore, what were the signs that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was making such a claim in person and action rather than with his tongue? The authors mentioned above do not give any such sign. In reality, Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's entire life and mission was about returning to the Quran and to the Sunnah. He never, in any of his words, claimed that his statements or position were above or equal to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Indeed, as noted in Chapter 2, he readily admitted that he was a human being, prone to making mistakes and in need of the advice of the scholars around him. The point was made earlier that his writings and the writings of his descendents, students and followers are all available. Therein there is no evidence whatsoever to support the claims of lies and fabrications such as this one.

Finally, it is known about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab that he was attracted to the books of Quranic commentary, hadith and so forth. There is no record from any chronicler that he grew up reading about or admiring the false prophets of old.

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[1] He says Abdul-Wahhaab rather than ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.
[2] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 82-83.
[3] Quoted in al-Husain, p. 267; Umairah, vol. 2, p. 55; Yoosuf, vol. 2, p. 282.
[4] See al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 83; Umairah, vol. 2, pp. 54-57. It would be lengthy to record all the false claims concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Hence, only some representative selections will be presented in this chapter.

In sum, as stated above, this allegation gives a clue as to the caliber of person one is dealing with while discussing the opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[1]

The Allegation that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab Belittled the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

This is one of the first allegations made against ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Ibn Suhaim made such claims concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and stated those allegations in the letters that he sent to the surrounding areas. Ibn Suhaim wrote, "He [ibn Abdul-Wahhaab] burnt the book *Dalaail al-Khairaat*[2] simply because it has the words, 'our leader,' and 'our lord (*maulaana*)' [while referring to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)]… It is also true that he said, 'If I could get control over the room of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) I would destroy it.'"[3] In his letter to the scholars of Iraq, ibn Suhaim further said that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab does not respect the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his position. Al-Hadaad later added to the fabrications of ibn Suhaim. He wrote, "He would belittle the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) often in many different statements, for example, [supposedly ibn Abdul-Wahhaab said] he [the Prophet] is stone-deaf meaning that the extent of his mission was like a deaf person who came to convey a matter and then leaves. Some of them would say that their stick is better than Muhammad for it is useful in killing snakes and so forth while Muhammad has died and there is no benefit from him left… Similarly, he disliked prayers upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and would be agitated any time he heard them and he would prevent them being said aloud on the pulpit on the night of Friday[4]…"[1] Dahlaan went even

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[1] Thus, for good reason, al-Nadwi (p. 40) wrote that Dahlaan's books are so filled with mistakes and fabrications that one does not even wish to rely upon them for even a trivial issue.

[2] This book was written by Muhammad ibn Sulaimaan al-Maghribi of the Shaadhili Sufi order.

[3] See al-Huqail, pp. 168-169.

[4] This allegation is actually true. However, it is in reference to saying such prayers after the call to prayer from the pulpit. This is an innovation that the people had started that was never practiced by the Prophet (peace and

further by writing, "[Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers] say that Allah sent Muhammad and revealed the Quran for him to convey it to the people. He [Allah] did not permit him to sanction for the people anything from himself. The Quran is all the religion. Hence, everything that has come in hadith and what the Muslims call obligatory sunnah is falsehood. It is not permissible to worship or act according to it."[2]

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself explicitly denied the early charges of ibn Suhaim against him. He stated that they are all pure fabrications—except for his opposition to the book *Dalaail al-Khairaat*, which he explained that he opposed because the people considered its reading more virtuous than reading the Quran.[3]

Actually, virtually all of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings and efforts clearly point to the falsehood of those claims made against him. (Indeed, simply skimming through his writings would be enough to convince an unbiased person of the falsehood of these claims—and that it is these opponents, therefore, who are to be blamed for their dishonesty, lies and disrespect for a Muslim individual.) In numerous works, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab makes his belief about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) very clear. In addition to what was quoted above, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also wrote, "From here we recognize the necessity above all necessities: the individual has to know the Messenger and what he came with. There is no path to success except upon his hands. Nor is there any way to distinguish the good from the evil except through his means of distinguishing them. The person's necessity to know the Messenger is greatly above any other need that is hypothesized and any other necessity that is presented."[4] He also stated, "The meaning of the testimony that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah is that one obeys him in what

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blessings of Allah be upon him), his Companions or their followers. Hence, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had every right and duty to object to such an innovation.

[1] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 96.

[2] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 97. These allegations of Dahlaan and others are so ridiculous that al-Qaseemi once wrote, "We request of them that they support any of those claims by any statement by any 'Wahhabi.' We do not even ask that they can ascribe it to Shaikh Muhammad or any of their scholars… In fact, we ask from them to be able to ascribe it to even the ignorant of their ignorant." Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 107.

[3] See Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 37.

[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 6, p. 13.

he has ordered, believes him in what he has said, avoids what he has prohibited and does not worship Allah except in a way he has sanctioned."[1] He also wrote, "The Messenger of Allah Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the leader of the intercessors, the person of the praiseworthy station. Adam and all who came after him will be under his banner."[2]

Five volumes of his collected writings are nothing more than the Prophet's hadith. Another volume is his abridged biography of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Yet another one is his abridgement of ibn al-Qayyim's *Zaad al-Maad* which is completely about the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). How could anyone claim that this man belittled the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when he stressed the study of the Prophet's sayings, life and deeds? Indeed, beyond that, he stressed the fact that if the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said anything, then nobody else's statement can ever take precedence over that. Who is it who cares more about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and knows more about him than the one who studies his words and life and tries his best to emulate them in his own life?

However, what ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers do not do is go to an extreme with respect to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). But this attitude is also in obedience to the Prophet's own commands. Thus, they do not raise him above the noble position that Allah has given him. This is the stance that is bothersome to the opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, the Sufis and Shiites among them in particular.[3] Hence, Muhammad ibn Uthmaan al-Shaawi wrote,

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, p. 190.

[2] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 90.

[3] These people's faith is not truly based on the Quran and the authentic Sunnah. If it were, they would not go to such extremes. Al-Abdul-Lateef (pp. 109-112) gives examples of what some of the opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab said concerning the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), exhibiting their extremism and their unwillingness to remain within the limits of the Quran and Sunnah. For example, al-Hamadaani stated, "Muhammad and the members of his household are holy lights. Allah created the creation just due to them." Al-Haddaad stated, "There is no time or space that is free of the noble body [of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)], not even the Throne or the Footstool or other parts of creation. The

They [the opponents] accuse them [the "Wahhabis"] of horrendous things that Allah knows never came from them. They claim that they belittle the Messenger and do not make prayers upon him. This [claim of theirs] is only because they [the "Wahhabis"] do not go to an extreme, as they apply the Prophet's statement, "Do not overly praise me like the Christians overly praised the son of Mary. I am only a servant. So say, 'The servant of Allah and His messenger.'" [Recorded by al-Bukhari.] Otherwise, they, with praises being to Allah, are the greatest of the people in their love for the Messenger, their following of him and the observing of his rights. He is greatest in their eyes, such that they could never go against his Sunnah or any of his statements simply in favor of some false custom or erroneous analogy. Herein, they differ from many of those who go beyond the bounds on either side of the proper limits. Some go to an extreme in extolling him, such that they raise him from the level of servitude to the position of godhood and lordship. At the same time, they also go to the [opposite] extreme with respect to following him, as they discard his Sunnah and do not pay any attention to his statements. They contradict the clear, authentic texts without any acceptable reason. In fact, they do not stop there but they even blame those who are serious and exert themselves to follow him, due to the false customs that they have become used to following. As for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), his rights are that he is assisted, respected, followed in what he came with, followed in his steps, believed in and that love for him should take precedence over love for one's family and wealth. As for worship, it is for Allah alone. No close angel or sent prophet share with Him in that in any manner.[1]

The Question of Declaring People Outside the Fold of Islam and Fighting Against Them

The knowledge of issues of who or what falls within or outside of the fold of Islam are of extreme importance for the spiritual health of an individual Muslim as well as for that of a Muslim community. Indeed, their consequences have great ramifications for both this life and the Hereafter. Also, mistaken views concerning this issue can lead to one of two extremes: the extreme of declaring Muslims to be non-

whole of creation being absorbed in him is like his grave's encompassing of him…"

[1] Quoted by al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 104.

Muslims or the extreme of accepting rightfully non-Muslims into the fold of Islam (hence, not putting an end to evils and idolatry that should be stopped). Thus, in general, it is important that these types of topics be understood in some depth. For these reasons—and in the presence of the idolatrous practices that had swept through the Muslim lands by his time—ibn Abdul-Wahhaab paid a great deal of attention to these types of issues and brought them to the forefront after they had been seemingly neglected by Muslim scholars for centuries.

However, issues of this nature are also important when discussing ibn Abdul-Wahhaab because they form the greatest of the attacks and doubts cast upon ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers. Indeed, it can rightfully be called a topic in which even those who appreciated or believed the same as ibn Abdul-Wahhaab had some confusion or doubt, not to speak of those who were looking for any excuse to castigate and attack him.[1]

In addition, this topic differs from some of the other topics in that concerning this topic, many of his opponents were in agreement with ibn Abdul-Wahhaab on a theoretical level but not so on a practical level. In other words, as ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote in some of his letters, they recognized that the actions that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab were describing as *kufr* (disbelief) and *shirk* (idolatry) were in fact *kufr* and *shirk*. However, they disagreed with him actually putting that into practice by then fighting against such *kufr* and *shirk* and against

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[1] For example, al-Shaukaani wrote in his biographical work *al-Badr al-Taali bi-Mahaasin min bad al-Qarn al-Saba*, "However, they [the 'Wahhabis'] believe that anyone who falls outside the authority of the ruler Najd and is not obeying his orders is outside of the fold of Islam." According to al-Bistawi, al-Shaukaani wrote that work while the fighting was going on between Abdul-Azeez and Shareef Ghaalib. Al-Abdul-Lateef notes that it is part of al-Shaukaani's fairness that he reported what he heard about the call of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He would say, "Some news has reached us about them and Allah knows best concerning its truthfulness." In any case, al-Shaukaani praised Abdul-Azeez's letter stating their beliefs and he also wrote an ode in praise of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Al-Abdul-Lateef notes that Muhammad ibn Naasir al-Haazimi, who praised ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, also held this kind of misconception concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings. Al-Abdul-Lateef then states that apparently al-Haazimi abandoned such criticism after the truth became clear to him. Similar was the case with Sideeq Hasan Khaan. He once said that the *ahl al-hadith* of India have nothing to do with the "Wahhabis" because the "Wahhabis" spill the blood of innocent people. (Sideeq Hasan Khaan was discussed in detail in the previous chapter.) Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 159-160.

those who defend or fight for such *kufr* and *shirk*.[1] It seems clear from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings that he was frustrated by the fact that scholars would agree that such acts were blatantly and enormously wrong but they would not agree upon the fact that such acts must be opposed, fought and eradicated.[2]

It is appropriate here to give some examples of what the opponents said regarding this matter. This attack upon ibn Abdul-Wahhaab first appeared relatively early during his preaching, while he was in al-Uyainah. Ibn Afaaliq wrote to the *Ameer* ibn Muammar, "This man declares the [Muslim] Nation to be disbelievers. In fact, by Allah, he belies the messengers and has ruled that they and their followers have committed *shirk*."[3] He also stated, "You have made declaring the family of the Prophet disbelievers, and disparaging them and cursing them, as one of the foundations of your faith."[4] In another pure fabrication, ibn Afaaliq then claimed, "He [ibn Abdul-Wahhaab] has falsely sworn by Allah that the Jews and polytheists are in a better state than this Nation."[5] Al-Qabbaani also made the same claim. Ibn Suhaim, in his letter to the scholars of different lands outside of Najd, openly lied by saying, "It is confirmed that he has said, 'For six hundred years the people have been upon nothing [of the truth]."[6] Al-Haddaad extended previous fabrications by stating, "If a person wants to enter into his [ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's] religion, it is said to him, 'Testify against yourself that you were a disbeliever. And testify against your parents that they died as disbelievers. And testify against the scholars so and so that they are all disbelievers,' and so on. If he bears witness to that, they accept him. If he does not do so, they kill him."[7] Dahlaan, who amazingly comes up with stories that no one else narrates, wrote, "They do not consider as monotheists save those who

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[1] Cf., Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 24-26.

[2] Allah alone knows best what were the intentions of those scholars. Unfortunately, such a stance can be the result of an unwillingness to risk one's popularity among the people. Another cause is an incorrect vision concerning what "unity" and "togetherness" are in a Quranic perspective. In contemporary times, such a stance is often the result of a false belief in a secular type of "freedom" that is not sanctioned by the Shareeah.

[3] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 163.

[4] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 163.

[5] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 163.

[6] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 164.

[7] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 165.

follow them… His [ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's] brother Sulaimaan one day said to him, 'O Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, how many pillars of Islam are there?' He replied, 'Five.' He [his brother] then said, 'You have made them six. The sixth is that whoever does not follow you is not a Muslim. For you, that is the sixth pillar of Islam.'"[1] The same allegations continue today on the pens of, for example, the Shiite Muhammad Jawaad Mughniyah and the Turkish Naqshabandi Huseyin Hilmi Isik.[2]

As noted above, these accusations first appeared during ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's lifetime. He immediately addressed these issues in a number of his letters. In his letter to the *mutawwa* of Thurmadaa, he wrote, "As for what the enemies mention about me, that I declare disbelief simply on the basis of conjecture or that I declare a disbeliever the ignorant one who has not had the proof established against him, they are grave lies. By them, they only seek to make the people flee from the religion of Allah and His Messenger."[3] In his letter to the people of al-Qaseem, he makes reference to the lies that ibn Suhaim spread about him, "And Allah knows that the man has fabricated statements from me that I never said nor that ever occurred to my mind. This includes his statement that I said that the people have not been on anything [of the truth] for six hundred years or that I declare as disbeliever the one who seeks closeness to Allah via the pious or that I declared al-Boosairi[4] a disbeliever or that I declare the one who swears by other than Allah a disbeliever… My response to those issues is that I say, 'Exalted be You [O Allah] this is great slander.'"[5] On another occasion he wrote, while refuting such false claims, "In fact, I call Allah to bear witness of what He knows in our hearts that whoever acts upon monotheism (*tauheed*) and is innocent of idolatry (*shirk*) and its adherents is a Muslim in any time and any place. And we only declare as disbeliever whoever associates partners

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[1] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 166-7.
[2] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 168-169. For more quotes of such allegations, see al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 163-169; al-Husain, pp. 282-285; Umair, vol. 2, pp. 66.
[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 25.
[4] Al-Boosairi had written an ode to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Scholars have objected to some of the statements he made in this ode. This ode is very popular among Sufis and is currently being recorded on tapes and CDs. It is even sold throughout the United States.
[5] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, pp. 11-12.

with Allah in His Godhood and the falsehood of *shirk* has been made clear to him."[1] He also wrote, "If we do not declare a disbeliever the one who worships the idol over the grave of Abdul-Qaadir or the idol over the grave of Ahmad al-Badawi and the like due to their ignorance and not having had the truth explained to them, how could we declare as disbeliever the one who does not associate partners with Allah or who does not migrate to us…?"[2]

Ibn Ghannaam also described how the attacks came upon ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and how the enemies showed their strong attachment to their sins and idolatry. Yet in the face of all those attacks, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab withheld his tongue and bore their attacks patiently. He did not declare anyone a disbeliever until all the attacks were set loose upon him and he himself and his followers were being declared disbelievers.[3]

Muhammad's son Abdullah also wrote, after stating that all such claims were lies, "Whoever witnesses our affairs and joins our meetings and verifies what we have will know with certainty that all of those things have been fabricated against us by the enemies of the religion and the brethren of Satan, in order to drive the people away from submitting with purity to the oneness of Allah in matters of worship and leaving all forms of *shirk*, which Allah has explicitly stated He will not forgive, although He forgives whatever is less than that to whomever He wills."[4] The same Abdullah, the son of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, also wrote, "As for [al-Boosairi] the writer of the *Burdah* and others in whose words one finds *shirk* and extremism in the religion and who have died, he [ibn Abdul-Wahhaab] did not declare them to be disbelievers. However, it is obligatory to object to their words and explain that whoever believes the apparent meaning of those words is an idolater, disbeliever. However, as for the one who stated it, his affair is left to Allah. It is not necessary to speak about the dead and one does not know if they repented or not…"[5]

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 60.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab., *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 48.
[3] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 172.
[4] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 172.
[5] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 172.

Similarly, Shaikh Abdul-Lateef, the grandson of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, wrote, "Shaikh Muhammad [ibn Abdul-Wahhaab], may Allah have mercy on him, was one of the most careful and abstaining when it came to a general declaration of disbelief. In fact, he did not even definitively declare the ignorant of the grave-worshippers who call upon other than Allah disbelievers. Nor did he declare others disbelievers if they had not had one who advised them and conveyed to them the proof that such actions make their doer a disbeliever."[1]

Similarly, al-Sahsawaani stated that he met more than one scholar of the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and he read many of their books and he did not find any evidence for the false claim that they declared "non-Wahhabis" disbelievers.[2]

This does not mean that they would never declare any individual a disbeliever. However, as Muhammad Rasheed Ridha stated, they would only declare as disbelievers those who met the conditions of disbelief as agreed upon by the Muslim scholars.[3] (In refuting the Shiites' claim that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab declared other Muslims disbelievers, al-Qaseemi noted that this fact is laughable coming from the Shiites who declare the best of all believers, the closest Companions to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), disbelievers.[4])

The Claim that the "Wahhabis" Are from the Khawaarij

Closely related to the previous claim concerning the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab is the claim that the "Wahhabis" are, in fact, Khawaarij. The Khawaarij (or Kharijites) first appeared in the first century of Islam and were opposed by the Companions and their students. The Khawaarij were known for their declaration that non-Khawaarij were all disbelievers. They also considered anyone who committed a major sin a disbeliever. Furthermore, a characteristic of the Khawaarij was that they shaved their heads and, finally, it is described in the hadith that they would appear from the land of Najd.

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[1] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 173-174.
[2] Al-Sahsawaani, p. 419.
[3] Muhammad Rasheed Ridah, footnotes to al-Sahsawaani, p. 419.
[4] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 176-177.

Al-Haddaad is one of the opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings who applied all of these characteristics to both the Kharaawij and ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's followers.[1] It was noted earlier that al-Saawi and ibn Abideen also tied the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to the Khawaarij. Muhsin ibn Abdul-Kareem made the claim that the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would not accept anyone into their ranks until he shaved his head.[2] Dahlaan and the Shiite al-Amali also made similar claims. In fact, al-Amali went even further and claimed that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was a descendant of Dhu al-Khuwaisarah.[3] Even the well-respected legal theorist of the 20th Century, Abu Zahrah, stated about the "Wahhabis," "They resemble the Khawaarij in that they declared people disbelievers simply due to sins committed."[4]

Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself stated his belief about sins and being within the fold of Islam. He wrote, "I do not declare any Muslim a disbeliever due to a sin nor do I take him out of the fold of Islam."[5] Furthermore, the Khawaarij were known for declaring themselves free of the rightly-guided caliphs Uthmaan and Ali, as well as other Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings

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[1] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 179.

[2] It is true that it was the custom of the Bedouins in particular of Najd to shave their heads. However, this was not something that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or his descendents considered part of the faith. Hence, they did not declare anyone a disbeliever simply on that basis nor did they force people to shave their heads. However, it is reported in a hadith recorded by Abu Dawood that upon entering into Islam, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered a man to remove his hair from the [days of] disbelief. Based on this hadith, some people did shave their heads after giving up *shirk*. According to Abdul-Qaadir al-Arnaoot the chain of that hadith is weak but al-Albaani concludes that the hadith is *hasan*. See Abdul-Qaadir al-Arnaaoot, vol. 7, pp. 338-339; Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Irwaa al-Ghaleel fi Takhreej Ahaadeeth Manaar al-Sabeel* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1979), vol. 1, p. 120.

[3] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 180-182; Umairah, vol. 2, pp. 61-66. Dhu al-Khuwaisarah was the man who told the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to be just in his distribution of the war booty. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then described his descendents. The Companions agreed that this description fit the group known as the Khawaarij. The claim that the "Wahhabis" were Khawaarij also reached al-Shaukaani in Yemen. He wrote, "Some people claim that he [ibn Abdul-Wahhaab] has the beliefs of the Khawaarij. I do not think that such is true." Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 183.

[4] Abu Zahrah, *Tareekh*, p. 199.

[5] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 11.

of Allah be upon him). On the other hand, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers are known for the great respect that they pay these and all the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).[1]

The Allegation That the Horn[2] of Satan Rises from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's Najd

Al-Bukhari records that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

عنِ ابنِ عمر قَالَ قَالَ اللهم بارِك لَنا في شامنا وفي يمنِنا قَالَ قَالُوا وفي نجدنا قَالَ قَالَ اللهم بارِك لَنا في شامنا وفي يمنِنا قَالَ قَالُوا وفي نجدنا قَالَ قَالَ هناك الزلازِلُ والْفتن وبِها يطْلُع قَرنُ الشيطَان

Ibn Umar said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "O Allah, bless us in our *Shaam* and in our Yemen." They [the people] said, "And in our Najd?" He again said, "O Allah, bless us in our *Shaam* and in our Yemen." They [the people] again said, "And in our Najd?" He replied, "There will be the shakings, trials and in it the horn of Satan rises."

Ibn Afaaliq was one of the first to use this hadith against ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, implying that his coming was the appearance of the horn of Satan and that they were the remnants of the followers of Musailamah the liar and false prophet. Ibn Afaaliq wrote in his letter to Uthmaan ibn Muammar, trying to convince him to cease his support of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, "As for you people of al-Yamaamah, in the authentic hadith, it is stated that among you shall appear the horn of Satan. You are still living in the [shade of the] evil of your liar [that is, the false prophet Musailamah] until the Day of Judgment. In that there is a lesson for those who reflect."[3]

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[1] Al-Uthaimeen (pp. 105-106) presents further arguments refuting the claim that "Wahhabis" are similar to the Khawaarij. Also see al-Husain, pp. 273-279.

[2] This could also mean, "the side of the head wherein a horn is usually found on animals."

[3] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 178.

The word *najd* in Arabic refers to a “highland, plateau”.[1] Hence, the same word is used to refer to different tracks of land. For example, *najd* in the language of the people of Makkah referred to the Najd of al-Yamaamah (in what is now central Saudi Arabia). However, *najd* in the language of the people of Madinah referred to the steppe and semi-desert lands of Iraq. The understanding of the hadith above, as stated by scholars present long before any kind of “Wahhabi” influence is that it was referring to the Najd of the people of Madinah or Iraq. Indeed, Iraq has clearly been the seat or source of many of the greatest trials in Islamic history.[2]

Such was the understanding of Saalim, the son of the famous Companion Abdullah ibn Umar, who said, “O people of Iraq, why do you ask about a small thing while you have committed a great thing. I heard my father say, ‘I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saying, “The affliction shall come from this direction.” And he pointed to east from whence the horn of Satan rises.’”[3] Ibn Hajar (d. 852 A.H.) also quotes (approvingly) al-Khattaabi as stating that Najd for the people of Madinah are the steppes and semi-desert of Iraq.[4] Al-Aini (d. 855 A.H.) also agrees that the East being referred to is Iraq, mentioning the trials of the Battle of Jamal, the Battle of Sifeen, the appearance of the Khawaarij.[5] He also approvingly quotes al-Khattaabi.[6] Al-Karimaani has virtually the same comments as al-Aini.[7] Obviously, all of these people lived long before Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

This interpretation of the hadith is also supported by the historical events related to Iraq. In Iraq occurred the appearance of the heretical group the Khawaarij, the killing of al-Husain, the fighting

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[1] Lane defines *najd* as, “High, or elevated, land or country; or hard, and rugged, and elevated, or high, table-land; only stony and rugged, or hard, elevated land, like a mountain, standing over against one and intercepting his view of what is behind it, but not very high…” E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (Cambridge, England: The Islamic Texts Society, 1984), vol. 2, p. 2767.

[2] Besides those mentioned shortly, see the long list in al-Husain, pp. 355-357.

[3] Quoted in Ahmad ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhaari* (Riyadh: Daar al-Salaam, 2000), vol. 18, pp. 58-59.

[4] Ibn Hajar, vol. 18, p. 59.

[5] Mahmood al-Aini, Mahmood, *Umdah al-Qaari Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhaari* (Beirut: Daar al-Turath al-Arabi, n.d.), vol. 24, p. 199.

[6] Al-Aini, vol. 24, p. 200.

[7] Al-Karimaani, *Sahih al-Bukhari Sharh al-Karamaani* (Beirut: Daar Ihyaa al-Turaath al-Arabi, 1981), vol. 24, p. 168.

between Ali and Muawiyah, the fighting between Ali and Aishah, the appearance of al-Mukhtaar who claimed prophecy, the trials and spilling of blood by al-Hajaaj ibn Yoosuf, the development of the Shiites, the first appearance of the heretical groups the Mutazilites and the Jahmites and so forth.

Finally, as Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Hasan, the grandson of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, noted, the hadith quoted above refers more to the state of being rather than the place itself. In other words, it may apply at one time and not another, depending on the characteristics of the people who live there. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) spoke very highly of the people of Yemen and yet the false prophet al-Aswad al-Anasi arose among them. Hence, hadith of this nature are not meant as blanket approvals or disapprovals. It applies in general but is still particularized by the actual actions or beliefs of the individuals.[1] In other words, even if the above hadith meant Najd, it does not mean that everyone from Najd is blameworthy regardless of his own personal faith.

In sum, the allegation casting doubt upon the integrity of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab because he came from the land of Najd wherein rises the horn of Satan is nothing more than a gross misinterpretation of a hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). If any individual has done that misinterpretation knowingly and intentionally, then the sin goes much beyond the libeling of a Muslim individual. It is the sin of twisting the teachings of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from its true meanings.

The Allegation that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab Considered Some Things to be Disbelief (*Kufr*) Which Are Not Disbelief

This is probably the arena in which the differences between ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his opponents are the greatest. As noted in Chapter 3, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stressed the importance of correct beliefs. He delineated based on the Quran and Sunnah those actions that clearly and unequivocally take one out of the fold of Islam. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his fellow scholars distinguished between the greater *kufr*, that takes one out of the fold of Islam, and the lesser *kufr*,

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[1] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 185-186.

which is a grave sin but does not take one out of the fold of Islam. Similarly, they differentiated between the greater act of ascribing partners to Allah (*shirk*) and the lesser *shirk*.

However, the state of affairs in the Muslim lands—among the scholars and the commoners—had reached such a level that they did not recognize the fact that a person may claim to be a Muslim and recite the testimony of faith but his own beliefs, statements or actions belie that claim and take him out of the fold of Islam. Furthermore, the real definition of *tauheed* had been lost on the people after years of wrangling by scholastic theologians and the mystical teachings of the Sufis. The people had truly become blind to the very essence of Islam itself. They thought that *tauheed al-ruboobiyyah* was all that there was to *tauheed*; therefore, they did not see any harm in directing acts of worship to other than Allah as long as one admitted that Allah is the only creator and sustainer. They failed to realize that, as demonstrated in Chapter 3, even the polytheists of Makkah at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) accepted that much. The Muslims had forgotten that the meaning of *ilaah* ("God") is the worshipped one. They had forgotten that the meaning of the testimony of faith is that there is none worthy of worship—meaning none should be worshipped via any act of worship—except Allah. As noted earlier, Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab described this view in one of his letters where he said that even those who claimed to have knowledge would say, "Whoever says, 'There is no deity except Allah,' is not to be declared a disbeliever, even if he rejects the resurrection or rejects all of the Shareeah."[1]

A reading of the criticisms of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, in the words of the critics themselves, makes it evident that it is the critics who either did not understand the real teachings of the faith or they were intentionally distorting the real teachings. Unfortunately, there is no third possibility.

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 41. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab goes on to say these scholars know that if anyone denies just a portion of the Quran or denies an act that is agreed upon by the scholars, he has committed *kufr*. He says that if such is their view of one who denies an agreed upon practice, what should be their ruling concerning one who rejects belief in the Hereafter?

Thus, one of the earliest opponents, ibn Afaaliq wrote, "Monotheism (*tauheed*) is to uniquely distinguish the ancient from the contingent, to single Him out with lordship and oneness, and to distinguish Him from all of His creation."[1] While speaking about the grave-worshippers, al-Haddaad wrote, "Those greatly revere the prophets and saints. They do not believe about them what they believe concerning the Truth [Allah], blessed and exalted, when it comes to complete, true, general creation. They only believe that they have an honored position with Allah concerning a particular matter and they attribute such [powers to] them in an allegorical manner. However, they believe that the source and action is only with Allah."[2] Dahlaan also specifically stated that *shirk* only occurs when one believes that someone other than Allah actually has real effect, and he says that no Muslim believes such.[3] Once again, what he is saying is that one can direct acts of worship to other than Allah as long as one does not believe that the other object of worship has any real effect of his own.

With this supposed concept of monotheism, sacrificing animals to other than Allah or seeking refuge with deceased people are not acts of *shirk* that take one out of the fold of Islam. Ibn Afaaliq early on denied that these acts constitute *shirk*, as they are merely forbidden acts. In his letter refuting ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, he stated, "The Nation is agreed that sacrificing animals or making vows for other than Allah is simply forbidden. Whoever does it has disobeyed Allah and His Messenger."[4] Even Sulaimaan ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, Muhammad's brother, rejected the notion that these types of act constitute the major idolatry (*shirk*) and disbelief (*kufr*). He wrote,

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[1] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 195.
[2] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 195.
[3] See the quotes from him in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 196. Similar statements may be found from many other authors in al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 196-199.
[4] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 197. One of the arguments that some opponents put forth is that some of the acts that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab described as *shirk* are described in the books of *fiqh* as *haraam* (forbidden). Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself addressed this claim. He demonstrated that any act that is *kufr* or *shirk* may also be described as *haraam*. In fact, such is found in the Quran itself, as in, for example, *al-Araaf* 33 where Allah begins the verse saying, "Say: Verily, my Lord has forbidden…" and among the things mentioned is, "and that you should associate with Allah that for which no authority has been revealed." In other words, an act can be both *haraam* and *shirk*, and a scholar may refer to it simply as *haraam*. Cf., Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 229 and vol. 3, p. 66; al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 201-202.

"From where do you get the notion that the Muslim who bears witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger and supplicates to one who is not present, or to the deceased or makes a vow to him or sacrifices for other than Allah is committing the greater *shirk*, such that his deeds become void and his wealth and blood become permissible?"[1] The Shiite al-Amali wrote in his refutation of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, "If [an individual] says in his supplication or in his seeking help from other than Allah, 'Fulfill my debt,' 'Cure my illness,' or 'Help me against my enemy,' then he is not doing anything forbidden or prohibited—not to speak of what implies his committing *shirk* or *kufr*. This is due to the knowledge that the monotheist Muslim believer knows that anyone other than Allah has no power to help or to harm himself or others."[2]

Herein is not intended a detailed refutation of these types of illogical claims. In addition, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's views on this topic were already presented in Chapter 3. However, the simplest and the most obvious question is how are the claims of these opponents in any way consistent with what Allah and His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) have said? Does not Allah say in the Quran,

وَأَنَّ ٱلۡمَسَٰجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدۡعُواْ مَعَ ٱللَّهِ أَحَدٗا

"And the mosques are for Allah (Alone), so invoke not anyone along with Allah" (*Jinn* 18).

فَلَا تَدۡعُ مَعَ ٱللَّهِ إِلَٰهًا ءَاخَرَ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ ٱلۡمُعَذَّبِينَ

"So invoke not with Allah another god lest you be among those who receive punishment" (*al-Shuaraa* 213). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said,

الدعاء هو العبادة

[1] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 198.
[2] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 199.

"Supplication is the [essence of] worship."[1]

Furthermore, if the common non-scholar Muslim truly believes that these people he is praying to actually have no affect, why then do they pray to them? Is it not true that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions never prayed to anyone or sought refuge from anyone in a grave, not from the earlier prophets nor from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) after his death? If this is such a beneficial act that truly helps one's prayers be answered by Allah, why did that best generation not set the example for that supposed beautiful and important act of worship? Given that the answers to these questions are obvious and it is very possible, if not a fact, that praying in such matters is truly a violation of one's *tauheed*, would it not be prudent for a Muslim to avoid such an act to safeguard the very foundation of his faith? However, the argument of the opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, then and now, are no different from what Allah describes in the following verses concerning the polytheists of Makkah:

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ ٱفْتَرَىٰ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِـَٔايَـٰتِهِۦٓ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ لَا يُفْلِحُ
ٱلْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنفَعُهُمْ
وَيَقُولُونَ هَـٰٓؤُلَآءِ شُفَعَـٰٓؤُنَا عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ قُلْ أَتُنَبِّـُٔونَ ٱللَّهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِى
ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَلَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ سُبْحَـٰنَهُۥ وَتَعَـٰلَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

"So who does more wrong than he who forges a lie against Allah or denies His signs? Surely, the sinners will never be successful! And they worship besides Allah things that hurt them not, nor profit them, and they say, 'These are our intercessors with Allah.' Say, 'Do you inform Allah of that which He knows not in the heavens and on the earth?' Glorified and Exalted be He above all that which they associate as partners with Him" (*Yoonus* 17-18).[2]

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[1] Recorded by Abu Dawood, al-Nasaai, al-Tirmidhi and others. Graded *sahih* by al-Albaani. See Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami al-Sagheer* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1988), vol. 1, p. 641.

[2] In his refutation of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, al-Shati gave the following story from his grandfather at the supposed grave of John the Baptist: He entered the

أَلَا لِلَّهِ ٱلدِّينُ ٱلْخَالِصُ ۚ وَٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّخَذُوا۟ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ أَوْلِيَآءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَآ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰٓ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِى مَا هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِى مَنْ هُوَ كَـٰذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ

"Surely, the religion is for Allah only. And those who take protectors and helpers besides Him (say), 'We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allah.' Verily, Allah will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ. Truly, Allah guides not him who is a liar, and a disbeliever" (*al-Zumar* 3).

Not only that, their reaction to the call of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, derived directly from the Quran, was no different from the reaction of the disbelievers and polytheists of earlier times. For example, they may not have called ibn Abdul-Wahhaab a crazed poet but their reaction was no different than as found in the verse,

Mosque of Banu Umayyah and he found an old woman praying, "O my master Yahya, give my daughter good health." He said to her, "O my sister, say [instead] by the rank of my master Yahya, give my daughter good health." She replied, "I know, I know. But he is closer to me to [reach] Allah." So she thus explained that her belief was sound, that only Allah has the power to bring about any benefit, and she only made that statement as a means of getting closer to Allah through her master Yahya. (That story was quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 196.) It is sad to have to say this in this way but upon reading such "proofs and arguments" from those who vehemently try to defend the common acts of *shirk*, one has to wonder whether those people actually read the Quran. Actually, perhaps Muhammad Rasheed Ridha described the situation best when he wrote, "From the amazing aspects of the ignorance of Dahlaan and others similar to him is that they think that what Allah describes concerning the falsehood of the *shirk* of the polytheists applies only to them [that is, the polytheists at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)]. They think that such are not proofs against anyone who does similar to what they did. It is as if it is permissible for a Muslim to commit *shirk* due to his Islamic citizenship, even if he commits every type of associating of partners with Allah enumerated in the Quran. Based on that, he cannot conceive of any kind of apostasy from Islam because anyone who is called a Muslim must also have his *kufr* and *shirk* called Islamic [*kufr* and *shirk*]. Or it is considered permissible for him or, at the very least, forbidden. Indeed, they considered it sanctioned based on a reinterpretation of the texts." Rasheed Ridha, footnotes to *Siyaanah al-Insaan*, pp. 479-480.

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوٓا۟ إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ أَئِنَّا لَتَارِكُوٓا۟ ءَالِهَتِنَا لِشَاعِرٍ مَّجْنُونٍۭ

"Truly, when it was said to them, "None has the right to be worshipped but Allah),' they puffed themselves up with pride, and say, 'What! Shall we give up our gods for the sake of a poet possessed?'" (*al-Saaffaat* 35-36).

Or their reaction was like that found in the following verses:

وَعَجِبُوٓا۟ أَن جَآءَهُم مُّنذِرٌ مِّنْهُمْ ۖ وَقَالَ ٱلْكَٰفِرُونَ هَٰذَا سَٰحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴿٤﴾ أَجَعَلَ ٱلْءَالِهَةَ إِلَٰهًا وَٰحِدًا ۖ إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَشَىْءٌ عُجَابٌ ﴿٥﴾

"And they (the Arab pagans) wonder that a warner has come to them from among themselves! And the disbelievers say, 'This is a sorcerer, a liar. Has he made the gods (all) into one God? Truly this is a curious thing'" (*Saad* 4-5).

قَالُوٓا۟ أَجِئْتَنَا لِنَعْبُدَ ٱللَّهَ وَحْدَهُۥ وَنَذَرَ مَا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ ءَابَآؤُنَا ۖ فَأْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَآ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰدِقِينَ

"They said, 'You have come to us that we should worship Allah Alone and forsake that which our fathers used to worship. So bring us that wherewith you have threatened us if you are of the truthful" (*al-Araaf* 70).

Finally, even in the books of the different schools of fiqh, there is clear support for the views that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab held. Hence he wrote in a letter, "Ponder over what is occurring between us and the enemies of Allah. We ask of them that they go back to their books that are in their hands concerning the issue of declaring a person a disbeliever and fighting against them. However, they never give us any response except complaints to the shaikhs and their likes."[1]

[1] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 20.

The Allegation that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab revolted against the Ottoman Caliphate

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Najd, at the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, was not truly under the authority of the Ottoman rulers. Indeed, it had been left on its own for quite some time. It evolved into a rather lawless state with each small village or Bedouin tribe having its own ruler. These rulers feuded and fought repeatedly with the others around them. Furthermore, when ibn Abdul-Wahhaab began his call in earnest, upon moving to al-Uyainah, he did so with the agreement and in alliance with the local *ameer* or established authority. Similarly, when he moved to al-Diriyyah, he made a pact with the *ameer* of that land for some twenty years, Muhammad ibn Saud. Hence, at no time did ibn Abdul-Wahhaab revolt against the rulers in his area. Furthermore, since Najd was never truly part of the Ottoman rule, he never revolted against the Ottoman rulers either.[1]

Even though such was the case and even though such should have been clear to those living at that time, this did not prevent the opponents from making the false claim against ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers that they were nothing more than renegades who revolted against the legitimate authorities. Ibn Afaaliq wrote, "Your monotheism (*tauheed*) includes revolting against the Muslims… That is blasphemy not *tauheed*."[2] As noted earlier, ibn Abideen also considered the "Wahhabis" renegades. Dahlaan, al-Amali and others also made similar claims.[3] Some, such as Abdul-Qadeem Zaloom, even blamed the "Wahhabis" for the fall of the Ottoman Empire, claiming that the British were supplying Muhammad ibn Saud and his son Abdul-Azeez with weapons and money.[4]

On this point, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab made his beliefs very clear. They are the same beliefs held by the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* throughout its history. In his letter to the people of al-Qaseem, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote, "I believe in the obligation to listen and obey

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[1] True, the new state did eventually go to war against other tribes in Najd as well as against al-Ahsaa, Hijaz, Iraq and so forth, but that was all after having been attacked and being placed in a situation where the legitimate rulers were forced to defend themselves.
[2] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 233.
[3] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 233.
[4] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 233-234.

the leaders of the Muslims, the pious and the impious among them, as long as they do not command an act of disobedience to Allah. This obedience is for whoever takes the position of caliph, concerning whom the people have agreed and are pleased with. Even if he overpowered them with force and became the caliph, it is obligatory to obey him and it is forbidden to revolt against him."[1] Muhammad Naseeb al-Rifaa'ee's description of what truly occurred between ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and the Ottoman rulers seems to be fairly accurate. He wrote,

> Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab never gave any thought to overthrowing the Muslim caliphate... However, the people around the caliph, who were from Sufi orders, distorted the news in order to rally the caliph against them [the "Wahhabis"], making it look like it was a movement against the caliphate itself, attempting to bring back the caliphate to the Arabs... However, the beliefs of the Shaikh are the true Islamic beliefs that does not take away the hand of obedience from a standing caliph unless he exhibits a clear, distinctive act of *kufr*. The Shaikh did not see anything of that nature that would lead him to call the people to remove the caliph. Even if the caliph were an evildoer in himself, as long as that impiety did not reach the level of a clear and pure *kufr*, it is not allowed to revolt against him or to negate his rule.[2]

Ajeel Nashmi concluded, "We can say with certainty that the writings of Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab do not state any clear stance of opposition toward the caliphate."[3] He also wrote, "We have not come across any ruling from him declaring the Ottoman state disbelievers. Indeed, all of his rulings were concerned only with the Bedouins close to him, those which he knew for certain were following idolatrous practices."[4]

What is certain, though, is that after the death of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, there did come a time when his followers in the different Saudi states were pitted in war against the Ottomans. On this point, al-Qataan and al-Zain write after a lengthy discussion,

> From all of this, it is clear that the Wahhabi call did not fight against the Islamic caliphate. It simply attempted to unify the

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 11. See also vol. 1, p. 394.
[2] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 237-238.
[3] Quoted in al-Husain, p. 394.
[4] Quoted in al-Husain, p. 394. Also see al-Qataan and al-Zain, pp. 146-150.

scattered people of the Arabian Peninsula under the banner of Islam. The one who started the fighting was the Ottoman State. If the advocate insists on saying the Wahhabi call did fight the Islamic caliphate, we say that it sought the correct position on that issue and it saw that the manifestations of *shirk* were widespread under [the Ottoman's] rule and it saw that it [the Ottoman rule] was protecting and adhering to Sufism and its orders, which are means leading to *shirk*.[1]

The Issue of *Tawassul* (Seeking a Means of Nearness to Allah) and Seeking Relief from Other Than Allah

Allah says,

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱبْتَغُوٓا۟ إِلَيْهِ ٱلْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَـٰهِدُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

"O you who believe! Do your duty to Allah and fear Him. Seek the means of approach to Him, and strive hard for His Cause as much as you can, so that you may be successful" (*al-Maaidah* 35).

One of the most repeated claims concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab is that he prohibited any type of *tawassul* (specific ways of making requests of and getting closer to Allah). In reality, though, the question is more related to the details concerning what is permissible and what is forbidden, possibly even *shirk*.[2] The opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab claim that it is permissible to seek a means of approach to Allah via people who are deceased. In other words, they see no difference between those who are still living and those who have passed away—both groups have similar abilities and similar standings in the sight of Allah. Actually, they went further and saw no

[1] Al-Qataan and al-Zain, p. 150.

[2] A complete, detailed discussion of this question is well beyond the scope of this work. In particular, those who believe in *tawassul* via the souls of deceased individuals quote a number of hadith and incidents to support those claims. The question of the authenticity of those hadith requires a detailed discussion beyond the realm of this work. Fortunately, two books are available in English that exhaustively discuss the topic in the light of the Quran and Sunnah. These books are: Muhammad al-Albaanee, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings* (Birmingham, UK: Al-Hidaayah Publishing and Distribution Ltd., 1995); Ahmad ibn Taimiyyah, *Kitab al-Wasilah* (Lahore, Pakistan: Idarah Tarjuman al-Sunnah, n.d.).

harm in praying directly to the deceased for aid and assistance. Hence, the opponents are calling for something that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers see as *shirk* and *kufr*. In this light, one can understand why this difference is one of great importance to both parties. It is truly—as one comes across so often in the life of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab—a question of faith and disbelief, of *tauheed* and *shirk*.

Al-Abdul-Lateef summarizes the views of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's opponents as the following two points: (1) It is permissible to seek a means of approach to Allah via the beings of any created soul, living or dead. The most honorable is, of course, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It is permissible to get closer to Allah via him during his lifetime, after his death and on the Day of Resurrection. In fact, it was permissible to seek a means of coming closer to Allah via the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) even before his appearance on earth. It is also permissible to invoke upon Allah anyone who is dear to Him. In the same way that one may seek a means of approach through one's deeds, one may also seek a means of approach through the very beings of the noble individuals that Allah has created. (2) It is permissible to seek a means through the living or the dead. This is because, in reality, there is no difference between the two. In the same way that the living has no real effect—everything is brought into being by Allah alone—the deceased also has no real effect. Furthermore, the deceased still has a life in his grave just like he did before he died. It can also be concluded that there is no difference between seeking help, refuge and rescue from a dead person and a live person.[1]

Those who objected to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's position on this issue include ibn Afaaliq, Umar al-Mahjoob, al-Haddaad, Ismaeel al-Tameemi, Ahmad Dahlaan and numerous others.[2] Again, the position of many of these authors is that if the person believes that Allah is the ultimate "doer" and no one has any true power save Allah, then it is permissible to request or pray to any "saint" or prophet as means of getting closer to Allah or to invoke Allah in the name of any prophet or "saint." For example, Dahlaan wrote, "*Al-tawassul* [seeking a

[1] Al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 241-242.
[2] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 242-256.

means of approach], seeking intercession and seeking aid are all of the same meaning. In the hearts of the believers, their only meaning is seeking blessings by mentioning those beloved to Allah, since it is confirmed that Allah has mercy upon His servants due to them, regardless of whether they are alive or dead. The one who truly brings about the effect and existence is only Allah. Mentioning those precious souls is simply a common means that produces that result like any other common [material] means that does not have any real effect."[1] Hence, in the same way that seeking sustenance in this life does not truly produce the sustenance—as Allah is the true and only sustainer—one still follows the means that commonly result in that sustenance. Thus, seeking help and closeness through the deceased is just another means that has no real effect unless Allah wills it to have such. The contemporary al-Alawi al-Maaliki states, "The souls have an ability and a freedom that allows them to respond when called to and to give rescue to those who seek rescue, exactly like the living—in fact, their ability is even greater and stronger."[2]

As noted above, the concept or the term *tawassul* or *waseelah* is derived directly from the Quran. However, over time it began to take on different meanings from how it was originally understood by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself and his Companions. Thus, one finds in al-Tabari's Quranic commentary, one of the earliest complete commentaries, that in the verse quoted above (*al-Maaidah* 35), "seek the means [of nearness, *al-waseelah*] to Him," refers to performing the righteous deeds that are beloved to Allah. That is how one comes closer to Allah. In fact, that is the only interpretation that al-Tabari offers, although it was his practice to present every view passed on from the early scholars.[3] In other words, there is not even any hint of the kinds of practices that later people developed and claim fell under the purview of this verse.

The means of getting closer to Allah were divided by later scholars into those that were permissible means and those which were heretical. The permissible ones, all supported by authentic hadith, included seeking a means of approach by invoking Allah's own names

[1] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 249.
[2] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 253.
[3] See Muhammad ibn Jareer al-Tabari, *Jaami al-Bayaan an Taweel Ayi al-Quraan* (Amman, Jordan: Daar al-Alaam, 2002), vol. 4, pp. 293-294.

and attributes, by referring to a righteous action that one has performed and by having a living righteous person pray on one's behalf.[1]

Over time, though, there developed a new way of approaching Allah. In this way, one begs of Allah by invoking the name or by referring to the honored status of one of Allah's servants. Hence, one says, for example, "O Allah, I beseech you by the right or status of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), grant me…" Or, "O Allah, I beseech you by the status of the 'saint' Abdul-Qaadir, grant me…" Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab considered this type of *tawassul* as a type of innovation that should be avoided. However, he never considered this type of *tawassul* an act of *kufr*, especially not when done in the name of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), since in this case the person is truly praying toward Allah. Such a form of prayer is considered an innovation because it was never performed by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), his Companions or their followers. For example, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) never beseeched Allah by invoking the status or right of his forefather Abraham. Similarly, in no authentic report did the Companions invoke Allah by the right or status of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Hence, as ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers concluded, such an act is definitely an innovation although there is no evidence to conclude that it is *kufr* or *shirk*.

Even though, in a blatant fabrication, Dahlaan wrote, "In every Friday sermon in the mosque in al-Diriyyah, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would say, 'Whoever makes *tawassul* through the Prophet has committed an act of disbelief.'"[2] Adding to such lies, al-Amali wrote, "The 'Wahhabis' prohibit every form of *tawassul* and consider them *shirk*.'"[3] In his letter refuting ibn Suhaim, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab specifically stated that this claim—that he considers the one who makes *tawassul* via the pious a disbeliever—is nothing but a fabrication.[4] In fact, he considered this issue of seeking a means of approach by invoking the names of the righteous as an issue of fiqh in

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[1] See al-Albaani, *Tawassul*, pp. 22-38.
[2] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 255.
[3] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 255.
[4] See Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 64.

which there is a difference of opinion. Since there was an acceptable difference of opinion, he would not even rebuke those who performed such an act.[1]

However, as alluded to above, matters evolved even beyond that. In the name of *tawassul*, people starting to pray directly to the deceased, asking them to intervene between themselves and Allah or, even worse, asking them to forgive their sins, thinking that they had some special dispensation from Allah for that purpose. They claimed that all of this was simply a type of *tawassul*, which is permissible. In other words, it was claimed that *istighaathah*, or seeking rescue and help, from other than Allah was permissible because it is no more than a type of *tawassul*. (Linguistically speaking and in the light of the terminology of the Quran and Sunnah, it is not acceptable to claim that *istighaathah* can be considered merely a subset of *tawassul*.[2])

Concerning this latter issue, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was adamant. This was not simply a difference of opinion in a matter of fiqh. This was an issue that struck at the core of faith. Supplications and prayers fall under the category of *ibaadah* ("worship") and as such they must be exclusively directed toward Allah alone. One cannot ask of anyone else anything that is beyond his apparent and normal means as a human being. Hence, to ask of the deceased to cure an illness, forgive sins, rescue one from a problem and so forth, all of which some scholars have justified in the name of *tawassul*, is nothing less than pure *shirk*. In addition, there is an implied claim that the deceased can perform said acts. However, knowledge of that fact is from the unseen and there is no proof in the Quran or Sunnah that the deceased can perform any act on behalf of the living. To the contrary, in the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) one finds that it is the deceased who are in need of the prayers of the living and not vice-versa. Furthermore, they are claiming that the deceased can continue to perform wonderful righteous deeds while in their graves—such as interceding on behalf of poor sinful individuals—while the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) clearly stated,

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[1] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 255-256.
[2] For more on this point, see al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 266f.

إِذَا ماتَ الإِنسانُ انقَطَع عنه عملُه إلا من ثَلاثَة إلا من صدقَة جارِية أو علْمٍ ينتفَع بِه أو ولَد صالحٍ يدعو لَه

"When a human dies his deeds come to an end, save for three: an act of charity that continues to 'flow,' knowledge that is still benefited from and a pious child who prays for him." (Recorded by Muslim.)

Abu Butain explained the attraction behind this false form of prayer. He stated, "When Satan realized that everyone who reads or hears the Quran flees from *shirk* and the worship of other than Allah, he cast into the hearts of the ignorant ones the concept that this is only *tawassul*, seeking intercession through them, turning to them and so forth. So he snatched the names *ibaadah* (worship) and *shirk* from their hearts and clothed them in new names that the hearts would not flee from."[1] However, names in themselves cannot change the reality or the essential ruling of something. It is still *shirk* that the ignorant ones had fallen into.

Closely related to this issue is the general question of making prayers or supplications to someone or something other than Allah. Although for many Muslims in the West today—perhaps partially due to the long-run beneficial influence of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's students, followers and supporters—this may seem like a very clear-cut issue, this is yet another issue in which ibn Abdul-Wahhaab faced a great deal of opposition. Thus, for example, al-Qabbaani wrote about praying for help to other than Allah, "As for what he claims that *istighaathah* (seeking help and rescue) is a type of worship of other than Allah and that it is part of the greater *shirk* of the *shirk* of the disbelievers, he does not establish any proof or evidence for that."[2] Al-Qabbaani also said, "It is permissible to make *tawassul*, seek intercession and seek help via the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as well as via others from the prophets or 'saints.'"[3] Al-Hadaad made similar remarks and said that the idea that one cannot pray to the "saints" is one of the lapses of "the Najdi," that is, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.[4]

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[1] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 269.
[2] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 349.
[3] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 349.
[4] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 349. For statements from other opponents, such as ibn Jarjees, Dahlaan, ibn Daawud and others, see al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 350-357.

The views of the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab are well expressed by his grandson Sulaimaan who wrote,

> Verily, *dua* [supplications, prayers, beseeching] is a form of worship, of the greatest forms of worship. In fact, it is the most honorable of all worship to Allah... If directing it towards others is not a type of *shirk*, then there is no *shirk* on earth. If there is *shirk* on earth, then *shirk* with respect to *dua* must definitely be considered more of a *shirk* than associating partners with Allah in any other act of worship. In fact, *shirk* with respect to *dua* is the greatest form of the *shirk* practiced by the polytheists that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent to. They would pray to the prophets, righteous and angels. They would get close to them so that they could intercede for them with Allah. Thus, during times of hardship, they would make their prayers purely to Allah and they would forget their [supposed] partners. It is even related that if they would face hardships while on the seas, they would throw their idols overboard and say, "O Allah, O Allah," due to their knowledge that their "gods" could not remove any harm or save the one in need.[1]

Hamid ibn Naasir ibn Muammar further strengthened the above argument by writing,

> We know by necessity that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) never sanctioned for his Nation to pray to any of the deceased, not a prophet, a righteous person or anyone else. Such prayers are not to be done with the wording of seeking help or any other words. In fact, we know that he prohibited all of those matters. We also know that such is from the greater *shirk* that Allah and His Messenger have forbidden... Allah says,
>
> قُلِ ٱدْعُوا۟ ٱلَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُم مِّن دُونِهِۦ فَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ كَشْفَ ٱلضُّرِّ عَنكُمْ وَلَا تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٥٦﴾ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ ٱلْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُۥ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُۥٓ ۚ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا

[1] Sulaimaan ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Taiseer al-Azeez al-Hameed fi Sharh Kitaab al-Tauheed* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1400 A.H.), p. 219.

> "Say: 'Call on those besides Him whom you fancy. They have neither the power to remove your troubles from you nor to change them.' Those whom they call upon do desire (for themselves) means of access to their Lord, even those who are nearest: they hope for His Mercy and fear His Wrath: for the Wrath of your Lord is something to take heed of" (*al-Israa* 56-57). These verses are addressed to everyone who prays to anyone other than Allah. In fact, that one who is prayed to [be he an angel, prophet or righteous person] is himself seeking a means of approach to Allah, hoping for His mercy and fearing His punishment. This verse applies to anyone who prays to any deceased or absent person from among the prophets or righteous. The person has indeed prayed to someone who cannot rescue him nor has he any power to remove any harm...[1]

Finally, Abu Butain refuted the claim of Dawood who said that it is virtually agreed upon that one may pray to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to be rescued and helped. Abu Butain stated,

> Then he claims that seeking help in the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) during times of hardship was something well-known and acted upon among the Companions and the Followers. Hence, he is attributing to the best of generations something that they, of all people, remained the furthest away from. It is sufficient to refute all these misconceptions by quoting Allah's words [relating to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)],
>
> قُل لَّآ أَمۡلِكُ لِنَفۡسِي نَفۡعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَآءَ ٱللَّهُۚ وَلَوۡ كُنتُ أَعۡلَمُ ٱلۡغَيۡبَ لَٱسۡتَكۡثَرۡتُ مِنَ ٱلۡخَيۡرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ ٱلسُّوٓءُۚ إِنۡ أَنَا۠ إِلَّا نَذِيرٞ وَبَشِيرٞ لِّقَوۡمٖ يُؤۡمِنُونَ
>
> "Say (O Muhammad), 'I possess no power of benefit or hurt to myself except as Allah wills. [If I had the knowledge of the unseen, I should have secured for myself an abundance of wealth, and no evil should have touched me. I am but a warner, and a bringer of glad tidings unto people who believe]'" (*al-Araaf* 188). And Allah said,

[1] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 358.

قُلۡ إِنِّى لَآ أَمۡلِكُ لَكُمۡ ضَرًّا وَلَا رَشَدًا

> "Say: It is not in my power to cause you harm, or to bring you to the Right Path'" (*al-Jinn* 21). That was his situation while he was alive, how must his situation be after death?[1]

The Question of Seeking the Prophet's Intercession

Another means by which the enemies of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and the truth tried to make people flee from his teachings was to claim that he prohibited the seeking of the Prophet's intercession. There is no question that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the most beloved human to every true believer. Hence, any belittling of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is going to stir the emotions of the Muslims. In this way, the enemies found a useful gate by which they could disgrace ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in the eyes of the common Muslims.[2] In particular, al-Qabbaani, ibn Dawood, al-Haddaad and others objected to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's views on this issue.[3]

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab addresses the claims against him concerning this issue when he wrote,

> If one says, "Do you reject the intercession of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and dissociate yourself from it?" Say: I do not reject it nor do I dissociate myself from it. In fact, he is the intercessor, the one whose intercession is accepted.[4] I hope for his intercession. However, all intercession belongs to Allah. Allah has said,

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[1] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 362.

[2] It is interesting to note that al-Qabbaani and others claimed that the idolatry of the polytheists referred to in the Quran was not due to their taking intercessors between them and Allah. Instead, it was only because they believed that the angels and pious people were sons and daughters of Allah or it was because they prostrated to their images. Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 278-279. See al-Abdul-Lateef's discussion pp. 278-286.

[3] See al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 278-286.

[4] In reality, this right of intercession is a blessing from Allah that He bestows upon whomever He wills. In this way, Allah honors those righteous people and gives them a noble place. Cf., Sulaimaan ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, p. 295.

قُل لِّلَّهِ ٱلشَّفَٰعَةُ جَمِيعًا

"Say: To Allah belongs all intercession." (*al-Zumar* 44). It cannot take place save after Allah has permitted it, as He has said,

مَن ذَا ٱلَّذِى يَشْفَعُ عِندَهُۥٓ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِۦ

"Who is it who can intercede with Him except by His permission?" (*al-Baqarah* 255). No one can be interceded for except after Allah has permitted it for him, as Allah has said,

وَمَن يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ ٱلْإِسْلَٰمِ دِينًا فَلَن يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ

"And whoever seeks a religion other than Islaam, it will never be accepted of him" (*ali-Imraan* 85). Thus, if all the intercession belongs to Allah and it cannot exist save after His permission, then neither the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) nor anyone else can intercede for anyone except after Allah permits him to do so. And He does not give such permission save for the people of *tauheed*. Thus, if the intercession belongs all to Allah, it should be sought from Him. Thus, one should say, for example, "O Allah, do not prevent for me his intercession," or, "O Allah, let him intercede for me."

If one were to say, "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has been given intercession and I am only seeking it from the one Allah has given it to," the response is: Allah has given him the intercession and He has prohibited you [from such a prayer] as Allah has said,

فَلَا تَدْعُواْ مَعَ ٱللَّهِ أَحَدًا

"So invoke not anyone along with Allah" (*al-Jinn* 18). But if instead you were to pray to Allah that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) should intercede for you, you would be obeying His words,

فَلَا تَدْعُواْ مَعَ ٱللَّهِ أَحَدًا

"So invoke not anyone along with Allah" (*al-Jinn* 18). Furthermore, intercession has been granted to other than the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It is authentic that the angels intercede, the righteous intercede and the deceased children intercede. Should you then say that Allah has granted them

> intercession, so should you seek it from them? If you say that, then you have reverted to the worship of the pious that Allah has mentioned in His Book. If you say no [one should not seek intercession directly from them], then you have voided your own argument that Allah has given him [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)] intercession and I seek it from the one whom Allah has given it to.[1]

In his book *Masaail al-Jaahiliyyah*, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote,

> They [the disbelieving polytheists] perform worship by associating the pious as partners in their prayers to Allah and His worship. They want their intercession with Allah, thinking that Allah loves that and the pious love that. This was as Allah has said,
>
> وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ شُفَعَٰٓؤُنَا عِندَ ٱللَّهِ
>
> "And they worship besides Allah things that hurt them not nor profit them, and they say, 'These are our intercessors with Allah'" (*Yoonus* 18). Allah also said,
>
> وَٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّخَذُوا۟ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ أَوْلِيَآءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَآ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰٓ
>
> "And those who take protectors and helpers besides Him (say), 'We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allah'" (*al-Zumar* 3). This is the greatest issue in which they [the polytheists] differed with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He came with purity [to Allah alone]. He informed that such is the religion of Allah with which all the messengers were sent. [And he informed them] that Allah does not accept any deed unless it is done with such purity. And he informed them that for the one who did the acts that they preferred, Allah has prohibited Paradise and given the Hell-fire as an abode. This is the issue that divided the people into Muslim and disbeliever. It is due to this issue that the enmity developed. And it is for this reason that jihad was sanctioned, as Allah says,

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, pp. 165-166. See also Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 113.

وَقَـٰتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ ٱلدِّينُ كُلُّهُۥ لِلَّهِ

"And fight them until there is no more *fitnah* (disbelief and polytheism) and the religion (worship) will all be for Allah Alone [in the whole of the world]" (*al-Anfaal* 39).[1]

Sulaimaan ibn Abdullah, the grandson of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, demonstrated that an individual choosing intercessors and turning to them is actually an act of belittlement towards Allah. He wrote,

> [The taking of intercessors] represents incorrect thoughts about the Lord of the Worlds. The one who takes such intercessors and equals must either think that Allah is in need of an assistant or helper to manage the affairs of the world—and that is the greatest of insults for the one who is self-sufficient, not in need of anything other than Himself and everything else is in need of Him—or He thinks that Allah's ability is only made complete by the power of the intercessor. Or, he may believe that Allah does not do something until the intercessor informs Him of it or that Allah does not have mercy until the intercessor grants mercy [*ad nauseum*. The author then goes on to mention many other ways that the person who believes in intercessors belittles Allah].[2]

Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Hasan, another grandson, made the very important point, "There is no doubt that seeking intercession from one who is deceased involves a number of aspects of worship: one asks someone other than Allah, one presents one's needs to someone other than Allah, one puts his hopes and aspirations in someone other than Allah, one turns to him with one's heart, face, limbs and tongues… This is the *shirk* that Allah does not forgive."[3]

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, p. 334. In addition to the points and verses ibn Abdul-Wahhaab quoted above, the interested reader should also read *al-Najm* 26, *al-Anbiyaa* 28 and *Yoonus* 3.

[2] Sulaimaan ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, p. 275.

[3] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 294. This is in addition to the fact that the petitioner must believe that the deceased has the ability to hear his prayers and have access to the unseen and so forth.

The Issues of Demolishing Tombs and Visiting the Graves

One of the most horrendous acts, according to the Sufis and the Shiites, that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers performed was the tearing down of tombs and the prohibition of pilgrimages to graves and mausoleums. Indeed, to them, this was virtually the final insult that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab gave to the prophets and the "saints". Ibn Suhaim, early on, called the destruction of the tomb of Zaid ibn al-Khattaab one of the heresies and misguided deeds of the "Wahhabis."[1] Al-Mahjoob, al-Hadaad, Dahlaan and numerous others joined in this attack on the "Wahhabis."[2]

The practice of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was truly completely consistent with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)—however, averse the people may be to that fact. One can say with certainty that neither the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) nor any of his Companions ever built a mosque, mausoleum, tomb or structure over any grave—neither with the intent of using it as a place of worship nor even simply for the sake of marking the location. Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab explained the position of the "Wahhabis" on this issue. He wrote,

> Building domes over graves is one of the distinguishing signs and portents of disbelief. Allah sent Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to destroy the idols, even if they were upon graves of righteous people. Al-Laat[3] was a pious man. When he died, they gathered around his grave, built a building over it and honored it. When the people of Taif embraced Islam, they requested that the tomb of al-Laat not be destroyed for one month, so that their women and children would not fear, until they entered

[1] He is quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 302.

[2] Cf., al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 302-311. For a description of what the common and ignorant people actually did of idolatrous and other acts at gravesites, such as the ones in Madinah, see al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 325-326.

[3] The idol known as al-Laat is referred to in the following verses of the Quran: "Have you seen al-Laat, and al-'Uzza, and another, the third (goddess), Manat? What! for you the male sex, and for Him, the female? Behold, such would be indeed a division most unfair! These are nothing but names which you have devised—you and your fathers—for which Allah has sent down no authority (whatever). They follow nothing but conjecture and what their own souls desire! Even though there has already come to them Guidance from their Lord!" (*al-Najm* 19-23).

> into the religion. That request was rejected and he [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)] sent al-Mugheerah ibn Shubah and Abu Sufyaan ibn Harb with them and ordered them to demolish it.[1]

Furthermore, Muslim records in his *Sahih* that Ali ibn Abu Taalib said to al-Asadi, “Shall I not send you on the same type of mission that the Messenger of Allah sent me on: Do not leave any statue without demolishing it and do not leave any raised grave without leveling it.”

As for the visitation of graves, they are of two types: that which is permissible and that which is forbidden, according to whether they are in accord with the Shareeah or not. The Shareeah recognizes three important reasons for visiting the graves: (1) remembering the hereafter, which is specifically mentioned in the hadith; (2) being good to the deceased, not cutting off relations or forgetting them; (3) fulfilling the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), in which he advised the visiting of the graves, thus helping the visitor, and making prayers for the deceased, which also helps the deceased. Thus, one can realize that the deceased is more in need of the living, because the living can still make supplications for them. The innovators have completely turned this concept around and go to the deceased and ask of him.

Furthermore, what is forbidden is to make the gravesite a place of worship, a mosque, a place of animal slaughter, a place of rituals such as circumambulation and so on. This is what happened to many of the gravesites over time, with big mausoleums built over them in complete disobedience to the instructions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In fact, many poor people believe that visiting certain graves is sufficient for the Hajj. One can find thousands of visitors flocking to those gravesites, with even books written on the proper rites to be performed at those graves, while the mosques are left empty. In any case, the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab did not see any harm in visiting graves in the proper manner, free of innovations, sins and idolatry.[2]

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[1] Quoted in al-Abdul-Lateef, p. 315.

[2] According to Bethmann, in *Bridge to Islam*, the “Wahhabis” prohibited all forms of visits to graves. See al-Uthaimeen, pp. 124-6. On pages 126f, he also gives the arguments of those who approve of such forbidden visits.

There is a difference of opinion concerning the permissibility of undergoing a journey with the sole intent of visiting the grave of a prophet or pious person. Some of the later Hanbali and Shafi'ee scholars, for example, said that it is permissible. However, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers were in agreement with ibn Taimiyyah and the earlier scholars who said that it is definitely forbidden to undertake such a journey, like a pilgrimage, with the sole intent of visiting a grave. This conclusion is based on the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said,

لا تشد الرحالُ إلا إلى ثلاثة مساجِد مسجِد الْحرامِ ومسجِد الأقْصى ومسجِدي

"Do not undertake a journey except to three mosques: the *masjid al-haraam* [in Makkah], the *masjid al-aqsaa* [in Jerusalem] and my mosque [in Madinah]." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Conclusions

In this chapter one has been able to see the quality of the criticisms as well as, one could argue, the nature of the critics. Many of the criticisms were nothing but pure fabrications while others were merely twisting the truth. These criticisms did not damper ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's spirit nor did it confirm for him that he was on the wrong path. On the contrary, he knew that such trials were bound to come. He also knew that as long as he remained faithful to Allah's words and the Messenger's words, in the end, nothing but good could be the result. He wrote in one of his letters, after explaining that he and his brethren were doing well and after expressing joy that those that he was writing to had joined the cause,

> Perhaps Allah will grant us and you the good of this life and the Hereafter. And He will grant us fortitude on this matter. But, o my brothers, do not forget Allah's statement,
>
> وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً أَتَصْبِرُونَ ۗ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ بَصِيرًا
>
> "We have made some of you as a trial for others: will you then have patience? nd your Lord is Ever All-Seer (of everything)" [*al-Furqaan* 20]. He also said,

أَحَسِبَ ٱلنَّاسُ أَن يُتْرَكُوٓاْ أَن يَقُولُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ ۝ وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ ۖ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ صَدَقُواْ وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ ٱلْكَٰذِبِينَ

"Do people think that they will be left alone because they say, 'We believe,' and they will not be tested? And We indeed tested those who were before them. And Allah will certainly make (it) known (the truth of) those who are true, and will certainly make (it) known (the falsehood of) those who are liars" [*al-Ankaboot* 2-3]. Therefore, you must know with certainty that whoever follows this religion is going to be tested. Have patience for just a little and then have the glad tidings for that little time of the good of this life and the Hereafter. And remember Allah's words,

إِنَّا لَنَنصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ ٱلْأَشْهَٰدُ

"Verily, We will indeed make victorious Our Messengers and those who believe in this world's life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth" [*Ghaafir* 51]. And His statement,

وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا ٱلْمُرْسَلِينَ ۝ إِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ ٱلْمَنصُورُونَ ۝ وَإِنَّ جُندَنَا لَهُمُ ٱلْغَٰلِبُونَ

"And, verily, Our Word has gone forth of old for Our slaves, the Messengers, That they verily would be made triumphant, and that Our hosts, they verily would be the victors" [*al-Saaffaat* 171-173]. And His words,

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يُحَآدُّونَ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥٓ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ فِى ٱلْأَذَلِّينَ ۝ كَتَبَ ٱللَّهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا۠ وَرُسُلِىٓ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَوِىٌّ عَزِيزٌ

"Those who oppose Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad SAW), they will be among the lowest (most humiliated). Allah has decreed, 'Verily! It is I and My Messengers who shall be the victorious.' Verily, Allah is All-Powerful, All-Mighty" [*al-Mujaadilah* 20-21]. If Allah provides you the patience for that and you become the "strangers" who adhere to the religion while the people have left it, then have glad tidings. Have glad tidings, as you will be from those about whom your Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) spoke, "Islam began as something strange and it will return as it began [that is, as being something strange].

> So glad tidings of *Tooba* [a tree in Paradise] for the strangers."[1] They said, "O Messenger of Allah, who are the strangers?" He replied, "Those who rectify themselves when the people have become evil."[2] Isn't that a wonderful blessing? Isn't that a great matter? May Allah make us and you from those who follow the Messenger and gather us under his banner and present us at his cistern, at which those who adhere to his way in this life will be presented.[3]

However, his story demonstrates that the ordering of good and eradicating of evil that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stressed (and was discussed in Chapter 3) is a key to bringing the Muslim nation back to the straight path. There is no question that much needs to be done as Muslims themselves, unfortunately, ignore the clear admonitions of the Quran and Sunnah in favor of their own customs, the teachings of their own "shaikhs" and holy men.

It should be noted that the opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab tried to destroy his call both physically and intellectually (if one wants to call it that, although their arguments were intellectually very weak). Even when they could militarily get an upper hand on the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, it did not mean that the call would die. Vassiliev stated, discussing the aftermath of the fall of al-Diriyyah, "[T]he Egyptians became absolute masters of central Arabia and started to root out the influence of the Saudis and the Wahhabis by fire and the sword. Emirs, military commanders and *ulama* were tortured, shot (singly and in groups), fastened to the muzzles of guns and torn to pieces… Captain G. F. Sadlier describes Ibrahim's campaigns as a series of barbaric atrocities and violations of his most sacred obligations…"[4]

Even after the state was crushed, the teachings lived on and were revived twice. In fact, today the teachings are dominating many parts of the world. This is because Allah does not will that His light shall ever be completely extinguished, even if the unbelievers are

[1] This portion of the hadith was recorded by Muslim.
[2] This latter portion was recorded by Ahmad. With this exact wording, the hadith, according to Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., is very weak. However, with a very similar meaning, a hadith is recorded with a good chain. See Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., footnotes to *Musnad*, vol. 27, pp. 237-238.
[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, pp. 308-309.
[4] Vassiliev, p. 158.

averse. In fact, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings can be considered akin to the "good" that Allah describes in the verse,

أَنزَلَ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌۢ بِقَدَرِهَا فَٱحْتَمَلَ ٱلسَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَّابِيًا ۚ
وَمِمَّا يُوقِدُونَ عَلَيْهِ فِى ٱلنَّارِ ٱبْتِغَآءَ حِلْيَةٍ أَوْ مَتَـٰعٍ زَبَدٌ مِّثْلُهُۥ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ
يَضْرِبُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْحَقَّ وَٱلْبَـٰطِلَ ۚ فَأَمَّا ٱلزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَآءً ۖ وَأَمَّا مَا يَنفَعُ ٱلنَّاسَ
فَيَمْكُثُ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْأَمْثَالَ

"He sends down water (rain) from the sky, and the valleys flow according to their measure, but the flood bears away the foam that mounts up to the surface, and (also) from that (ore) which they heat in the fire in order to make ornaments or utensils, rises a foam like unto it, thus does Allah (by parables) show forth truth and falsehood. Then, as for the foam it passes away as scum upon the banks, while that which is for the good of mankind remains in the earth. Thus Allah sets forth parables (for the truth and falsehood)" (*al-Rad* 17).

There is another point that constantly comes to this author's mind when reading the works of the opponents of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. It is not really ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings that they oppose. It is the actual and clear teachings of Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In fact, as shall be made even clearer in the following chapter, the opponents do not even resort to Quranic verses or authentic hadith to refute ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Indeed, one is directly reminded of the kind words of support and admonition that Allah gave His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُۥ لَيَحْزُنُكَ ٱلَّذِى يَقُولُونَ ۖ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ وَلَـٰكِنَّ
ٱلظَّـٰلِمِينَ بِـَٔايَـٰتِ ٱللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَصَبَرُوا۟
عَلَىٰ مَا كُذِّبُوا۟ وَأُوذُوا۟ حَتَّىٰٓ أَتَىٰهُمْ نَصْرُنَا ۚ وَلَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَـٰتِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَلَقَدْ
جَآءَكَ مِن نَّبَإِى۟ ٱلْمُرْسَلِينَ

"We know indeed the grief which their words cause you (O Muhammad): it is not you that they deny, but it is the verses of Allah that the wrongdoers deny. Verily, (many) Messengers were denied before you, but with patience they bore the denial, and they were hurt, till Our Help reached them, and none can alter the Words of Allah. Surely there has reached you the information (news) about the Messengers (before you)" (*al-Anaam* 33-34).

Indeed, it can be concluded that the way of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was the way of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions. Those who opposed or oppose him are simply being blind to the truth of this matter, although it is clear and open for all to see. Even Vassiliev noted, "The Wahhabis seem orthodox from a dogmatic viewpoint. This is their own opinion, as well as that of the majority of objective experts, both in the Arab world and outside; it is also the view of contemporaries of the initial movement and of later scholars."[1] Then he stated,

> Burckhardt reports that the Cairo *ulama*, who were generally opposed to the Wahhabis, stated that they had found no heresy in their teaching. Since this statement was made contrary to the *ulama*'s 'own will', it hardly causes any suspicion. After reading Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's book, many Cairo *ulama* declared unanimously that if it expressed the Wahhabis' opinion, they too (the *ulama*) were wholeheartedly of their faith. Abu Ras al-Nasiri, an Algerian *alim*, asserted that the Wahhabis' dogma was entirely orthodox. Ibn Sanad, a chronicler from Basra, noted that the Wahhabis were the Hanbalis of the past...[2]

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[1] Vassiliev, p. 75
[2] Vassiliev, p. 75.

VI
Recent English Literature on Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to briefly survey some of the English literature related to Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. The emphasis will be on recently published works[1] of—or supposedly of—a scholarly nature.[2] Hence, the sensationalism and propaganda that one hears in the common media concerning "Wahhabism" will not be discussed here, although it is deserving of a study in itself.

General Studies on Islam

With the interest in Islam growing since the 1970s, a number of new introductory works or general surveys of Islam have been published. Some of them are of the same tenor as earlier works, being very anti-Islam. Others are much more "sympathetic" and objective. A number of these works, as well as other works that deal with the Middle East or Muslim revival, touch upon ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his mission. In general, one can say that as more information about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab becomes widely available, the views of him are becoming more and more positive.

For example, Peter Mansfield wrote *A History of the Middle East,* discussing the recent history of the Middle East. A complete discussion of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was beyond the scope of his work because he lived before the time Mansfield wished to cover. However, Mansfield was very familiar with Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and wrote about him, "In the middle of the eighteenth century in Nejd in the centre of the peninsula, a remarkable religious reformer named Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab appeared spreading the essential doctrine of *Tawhid* or the uniqueness of God,

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[1] Although not necessarily recently written works.

[2] A review of much of the earlier Western literature touching upon ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or the "Wahhabis" may be found in Aali-Bootami, pp. 154-157, al-Nadwi, pp. 235-249 and al-Huqail, pp. 241-243. Thus that material will not be repeated here.

denouncing the prevalent backsliding and idolatry, and calling for a return to the purity of early Islam."[1]

Unfortunately, though, those researchers who seem to be serious as well as objective often run into the same type of confusion that one finds over and over concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. The purpose here is to be brief and not critique everything that these authors have said. In the end though it can be said that these authors seem much more objective but continue to rely upon sources that are not of the best quality in understanding the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. (This can be verified simply by looking at the sources they used. In general, they do not use ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's own writings nor the writings of his followers to understand what the teachings were about.) It is important to note that it seems that they tried to be very fair and objective in their analysis, unlike many other Orientalists and, unfortunately, even other Muslims.

For example, Karen Armstrong, often presented as an authority on Islam, writes with a mixture of accurate and inaccurate statements,

> In the Arabian Peninsula, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab managed to break away from Istanbul and create a state of his own in central Arabia and the Persian Gulf region. Abd al-Wahhab was a typical Islamic reformer. He met the current crisis by returning to the Koran and the Sunnah, and by vehemently rejecting medieval jurisprudence, mysticism and philosophy. Because they diverged from pristine Islam, as he envisaged it, Abd al-Wahhab declared the Ottoman sultans to be apostates, unworthy of the obedience of the faithful and deserving of death. Their Shariah was inauthentic. Instead, Abd al-Wahhab tried to create an enclave of pure faith, based on the practice of the first Muslim community in the seventh century...[2]

In Frederick Denny's *An Introduction to Islam*, he discusses ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and the "Wahhabis" for about four pages.[3] Unfortunately, as is clear in his footnotes, Denny does not rely upon

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[1] Peter Mansfield, *A History of the Middle East* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 40.

[2] Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2000), p. 44. For some reason, Armstrong first identifies the individual as Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and then goes on to refer to him simply as Abd al-Wahhab.

[3] Frederick Denny, *An Introduction to Islam* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1994), pp. 324-327

any work that can be considered a truly reliable source on the life of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He starts his discussion by reviewing his own discussion of ibn Taimiyyah, who called for *ijtihaad* and fought against the excesses of the Sufis. He states that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab traveled widely "studying theology, philosophy, and jurisprudence as well as Sufism. In Iran he became a Hanbali…"[1] Besides the fact that Iran is a very strange place to expect one to become a Hanbali, this passage reflects the kind of sources Denny relied on. His description of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's message is much closer to the mark. He, for example, writes,

> Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab followed the lead of ibn Taimiya and returned to the Quran, the Sunna and the Sunni legal positions that were worked out in the first three centuries, especially as represented in the Hanbali *madhhab*. He and his followers denounced all else as heresy (*bid'a*)[2] and worked to rid Arabia of it. Saint veneration was singled out for annihilation, and the early Wahhabis did succeed in razing any mosques, shrines, and tombs that were in any way dedicated to the memory or centered in the ongoing cult of *walis* ["saints"]... Anything resembling *shirk* was stamped out, such as seeking intercession with God through anyone other than God (and he only on the Last Day, as the Quran allows[3]), making a vow to any but God...[4]

Denny then goes on to briefly discuss the influence as well as the opposition to the "Wahhabis." He somehow concludes that unlike Ibn Taimiyyah, the "Wahhabis" were not able to put their principles into practice and form a true governmental system that could be universally acceptable and reformative.[5] Actually, the opposite is probably closer to the reality. It was ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers who were able to put into practice what ibn Taimiyyah was never able to put into practice.

In John Esposito's *Islam: The Straight Path*, he touches upon ibn Abdul-Wahhaab on a number of occasions. He describes him along with al-Ghazali, ibn Taimiyyah and Shah Wali Allah as "great renewers or revivalists" who were calling people to *ijtihaad* and

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[1] Denny, p. 325.
[2] This statement is obviously something of an exaggeration.
[3] This is a misinterpretation of the issue that was discussed in Chapter 5.
[4] Denny, pp. 325-326.
[5] Cf., Denny, p. 327.

attempting to correct the excesses of the Sufis.[1] The influence of some of the inferior sources on ibn Abdul-Wahhaab can be seen here too where Esposito writes that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab "was trained in law, theology, and Sufism at Mecca and Madina, where he was drawn to the Hanbali school…"[2] He goes on to state that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was appalled by his society, which he considered no better than the Days of Ignorance. Esposito writes,

> He was appalled by many of its popular religious practices, such as the veneration of saints and their tombs, which he condemned as pagan superstitions and idolatry, the worst of sins in Islam. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab denounced these beliefs and practices as unwarranted innovations. They compromised the unity of God (Islam's radical or absolute monotheism) and the Islamic community, as evidenced by the tribalism and tribal warfare that had returned to Arabia... The diagnosis of ibn Abd al-Wahhab was similar to that of other revivalists. The political weakness of the community and its moral decline were due to a deviation from the straight path of Islam. Its cure was equally obvious; the task was clear. Muslims must return to true Islamic practice. This could be achieved only by a repetition of Islam's first great reformation, the social and moral revolution led by Muhammad, a return to a community life based strictly on the Quran and the example of Muhammad and the Medinan community.[3]

After that rather accurate portrayal, Esposito then goes on to describe ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's pact with Muhammad ibn Saud. He describes the call as a "militant reformist movement" that "waged holy war with an uncompromising Kharijite-like commitment that viewed all Muslims who resisted as unbelievers, enemies of God who must be fought."[4]

Perhaps the best recent discussion of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's life in a "Western" work is the article written by Ayman al-Yassini for *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*.[5] In preparing

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[1] John Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 117.
[2] Esposito, p. 118.
[3] Esposito, p. 118.
[4] Esposito, pp. 118-119.
[5] Ayman al-Yassini, "Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), vol. 2, pp. 159-160.

this article, al-Yassini relied on the earliest and most reliable sources in Arabic (ibn Bishr's work in particular). Al-Yassini has a good description of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's background, briefly touches upon his travels, the beginning of his call and its success. There may be just a few points that are open to criticism but as a whole, the information is factual and accurate. In a separate article, "Wahhabiyah," the same al-Yassini again gives an excellent description of some of the main features of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings. He discusses the issue of *tauheed*, *tawassul*, erection of tombs over graves, charge of unbelief, innovations and *ijtihaad* and *taqleed*.[1]

Western Travelers

Some of the earliest accounts coming to the West concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers came from Western "travelers." In general, these were men who were traveling through the Middle East on Western scientific or government related projects.

Danish traveler Carsten Niebuhr (1733-1815 C.E.) was among the first to speak about "Wahhabis" in the Western literature, being in the Persian Gulf in the years 1764-1765. In reality, he did not touch too much upon the "Wahhabis," being more interested in the lands to the east of Najd. Parsons, another early traveler, was also in the Middle East around the same time, but again not in Najd. Sir Hartford Brydges was in Basra, Kuwait and Baghdad in the 1790s and offers much insight for life at that time. John Lewis Burckhardt's *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys* (originally published in 1830) gives a great deal of information concerning the social situation in Najd. In the 1860s, William Palmgrave, "a member of the Society of Jesus and a French agent, infiltrated into central Najd and visited Riyadh."[2] Even though he actually visited the area, his account has numerous errors in it, to the extent that it was doubted whether he actually visited Najd.[3]

In general, one has to agree with Abu-Hakima's assessment: "European and Moslem writings contemporary to the Shaikh are very

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[1] Ayman al-Yassini, "Wahhabiyah," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), vol. 4, pp. 307-308.

[2] Vassiliev, p. 17.

[3] Ibid., p. 17. For a general discussion of the sources related to this period of history and this particular region, ranging from Arabic sources to British semi-official sources, see Vassiliev, pp. 12-19; Abu-Hakima, pp. 1-23.

misleading. Their erroneous statements were criticised by later European writers like Burckhardt in his *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys*."[1] For example, Niebuhr was the first to send information to the Europeans about the appearance of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He admitted that he was in a place wherein it was difficult to find accurate information about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's belief. He mentioned that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab considered the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and all the other prophets simply as sages, denying that any book was actually revealed by God.[2] Later European writers and visitors to the area were influenced by Niebuhr's erroneous ideas. Some (such as Waring and Rouseau) said that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab did not believe that Allah revealed the Quran. Others (such as Malcolm, Raymond and Corancez) stated that he rejected the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) only.[3] Perhaps the strangest information concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab is noted by Bidwell who stated that "a report had reached Bonaparte in Egypt that their leader [that is, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab] was a renegade French Jesuit."[4]

In this chapter, two early books that have recently been published for the first time in English or republished will be reviewed. One is Louis Alexandre Olivier de Corancez's *The History of the Wahabis*[5] and the second is Burckhardt's *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys*. The former is chosen because it is one of the first books written in a Western language entirely on the "Wahhabis." The second is chosen to demonstrate that some accurate information was available from a fairly early time.

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[1] Abu-Hakima p. 127.

[2] See al-Uthaimeen, p. 104. Al-Uthaimeen published an article in the journal of the college of social sciences at Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University detailing the numerous mistakes of Niebuhr. That article, though, is not available to this author.

[3] See al-Uthaimeen, p. 104.

[4] Robin Bidwell, Introduction to John Lewis Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys* (Reading, England: Garnett Publishing, 1992), vol. 1, introduction, no page number.

[5] Louis Alexandre Olivier de Corancez, *The History of the Wahabis from their Origin until the end of 1809* (Eric Tabet, trans. Reading, England: Garnet Publishing, 1995).

De Corancez

De Corancez was from France. He was appointed the French consul in Aleppo in 1802. He first published this book in French in 1810. What makes this book of interest is that de Corancez himself never traveled to Najd. Instead, he visited Syria. His sources of information concerning the "Wahhabis", therefore, were restricted to what was being spread about the "Wahhabis" in Ottoman Syria in the early 1800s. Much of his information may have also come from a Maronite Christian inhabitant of Aleppo.[1] One can, therefore, possibly excuse de Corancez for the strange statements that he made because he was simply conveying the misinformation that he was able to gather at his source.

For the sake of brevity, a few of de Corancez's statements will be presented here. Furthermore, much of this book deals with historical events after the death of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and beyond the scope of this work. Thus, only portions related to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his beliefs will be noted here. The book is a peculiar combination of fact and strange fiction. The truth-value of these statements should, by now, be obvious and, hence, there will be no need for critique.

At the outset, he states, "If, however, the Wahabis remain within the confines of Arabia of which they are at present the masters, their achievements are already of sufficient merit to warrant recording for posterity."[2]

On page 6, it is written,

> The Sheikh Mohammed rejected with equal harshness any worship of Christ, Moses, or other prophets recognized by the Muslims. He proclaimed that God had disowned the Turks because they worshipped Mohammed himself... His first edict was to massacre them [the Turks] because they offended the majesty of God and defiled true worship of him.
>
> This doctrine found converts among Mohammed's tribesmen, but they were too small in number to constitute a threat; a greater force was needed to enforce adherence to so intolerant a creed. Sensing this, Mohammed departed from Yemen, scouring Syria and the borders of the Euphrates. He sought to convert a pasha or prince who might provide him with riches and weapons. Rejected in

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[1] See de Corancez's statement, p. xx.
[2] De Corancez, p. xvii.

> Mecca and Damascus, and expelled from Baghdad and Basra, he returned to Arabia, where he received a more favourable welcome from Ibn Saud, ruler of Diriyah and al-Hasa.[1]

Shortly after that, he states that the "new faith" organized itself and "the reformers adopted the name of Wahabi, after their founder's father."[2]

About the beliefs of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, de Corancez wrote,

> This doctrine consists of a single tenet: the existence and oneness of God. Though the Wahabis admit of a revelation, this revelation teaches them nothing else than this tenet. In adopting the Mohammedans' profession of faith—There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet—they have removed the last part, reducing it to the saying: There is no God but Allah. As a result they have come to be regarded as mere deists, and some travellers [*sic*] have erroneously claimed that theirs is only a natural religion.
> The principal difference between Mohammedans [that is, non-Wahhabis] and the Wahhabis concerns their views about the nature of the Prophet Mohammed: the former regard him as a prophet, the latter as a sage.[3]

However, on the very next page, he seems to somewhat contradict what he just said, writing, "In general, the religion of the Wahabis is that of the Koran shorn of all superstitions with which the Mohammedans have distorted it. It is thus less a new creed than a return to Islam in its original simplicity."[4]

He then writes,

> But in this coarse man, partisan spirit often prevailed over reason, and his hatred of the Mohammedans led him to prohibit some of their most reasonable practices as criminal. The most widely observed usages may become anathema to the Wahabis for no other reason than that the Mohammedans' adhere to them.[5]

De Corancez then goes on to describe the destruction of the shrines, tombs and mausoleums built over graves. Note that in this passage he has a strange interpretation for ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's intention. He fails to note that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was actually fulfilling a

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[1] De Corancez, p. 6.
[2] De Corancez, p. 8.
[3] De Corancez, pp. 11-12.
[4] De Corancez, p. 13.
[5] De Corancez, p. 14.

command of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)—but, of course, poor de Corancez had already obviously been fed the propaganda that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab belittled the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) such that he probably could have never realized that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was fulfilling the prophet's commands.

In Burrell's introduction, written in 1995, he says that de Corancez refers to the Wahhabis as "reformed Muslims" while he refers to the non-Wahabis as "Mohammedan Muslims," because, Burrell writes, "of the much greater status the latter afford the Prophet."[1] Of course, nothing could be further from the truth to claim that the Ottoman Turks, Sufis and blind followers of the different schools of fiqh afford the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) more status than the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

An interesting thing about this book is that it was translated into English and published recently, in 1995, yet there is no attempt in the introduction or footnotes to point out the mistakes that the author made. The reader is left with the impression that de Corancez's description of the "Wahhabi" beliefs are accurate. De Corancez himself could be excused as he was forced to work with what was available to him given his time and place. However, there is no such excuse for the translator or publishers who have a great deal of at least more accurate information available to them.

Burckhardt

Burckhardt was very close to Muhammad Ali Pasha, the one who militarily defeated and destroyed al-Diriyyah. He spent much of his time in the Hijaz, having performed the pilgrimage under disguise as a Muslim. However, he lived for many years among the Bedouins between the Hijaz and Syria. Although his accounts of the Wahhabis are considered second-hand, they are to a good extent remarkably accurate, perhaps because he spent some of his time with Bedouin tribes that could be considered "Wahhabis." Here just a few passages from his work will be quoted in order to give the reader a glimpse of his views.

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[1] R. M. Burrell, "Introduction," to de Corancez, p. xi.

It definitely seems that Burckhardt truly meant to be objective in his study. He begins his section on the Wahhabis by writing,

> Respecting the Wahabys, various contradictory and erroneous statements have been given in the few accounts hitherto published. Some anecdotes of those remarkable sectaries, collected from the best sources of information to which I could obtain access in the East, may prove interesting to many readers. I must, however, regret, that during my residence in Hedjaz [Hijaz] this country was, on account of the war with Mohammed Aly, closed against the people of Nedjd, who, above all others, were qualified to give faithful and accurate details of the Wahabys; while those Bedouins of the common classes, who had adopted the new faith, were, in general, wholly ignorant of its true import and doctrines.[1]

For some reason, though, Burckhardt continues to refer to the original teacher as Abd el Wahab instead of ibn Abd el Wahab (to use his writing of the word). About ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings, he writes,

> The doctrines of Abd el Wahab were not those of a new religion; his efforts were directed only to reform abuses in the followers of Islam, and to disseminate the pure faith among Bedouins; who, although nominally Muselmans, were equally ignorant of religion, as indifferent about all the duties which it prescribed. As generally has been the case with reformers, he was misunderstood both by his friends and his enemies. The latter, hearing of a new sect, which accused the Turks of heresy, and held their prophet, Mohammed, in much less veneration than they did, were easily persuaded that a new creed was professed, and that the Wahabys were consequently not merely heretics, but *kafir*s, or infidels...[2]

He notes that the true teachings of the "Wahhabis" are nothing more than the well-known teachings of Islam and it was only the negative propaganda about them that led people to believe otherwise. Thus, he writes,

> If farther proof were required that the Wahabys are very orthodox Muselmans, their catechism would furnish it. When Saoud took possession of Makkah, he distributed copies of this catechism among the inhabitants, and ordered that the pupils in public schools should learn it by heart. Its contents are nothing more than

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[1] Burckhardt, vol. 2, pp. 95-96.
[2] Burckhardt, vol. 2, pp. 99-100.

> what the most orthodox Turk must admit to be true... The chief doctrines of the Wahabys, it will be seen, correspond with those taught in other parts of the Muselman empire. The Koran and the traditions of Mohammed (*Sunne*) are acknowledged as fundamental, comprising the laws; and the opinions of the best commentators on the Koran are respected, although not implicitly followed.[1]

He then goes on to describe some of their differences with the "Turks." He states, "the Wahabys reproach the Turks with honouring the prophet, in a manner which approaches adoration, and with doing the same also to the memory of many saints… By once admitting the Koran as their revealed law, the Turks were obliged to believe implicitly the numerous passages wherein it is expressly declared that Mohammed is a mere mortal like themselves. But the fanatic love for their prophet[2] could not be content with this modest declaration."[3]

Burckhardt then goes on to describe the many reforms and changes that were brought about by the followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, in particular the members of the family of Saud, the rulers of the new state. He describes in some detail how the Saud government worked, including its policies of justice and its sources of revenue. He also discusses in some detail military aspects of that early state. He also describes how the "Wahhabis" first fought against the Sharifs of the Hijaz, showing that it was originally an act of aggression on the part of the Sharif.[4]

Much of Burckhardt's work is beyond the scope of this work and the above gives a sufficient amount of information concerning his book.

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[1] Burckhardt, vol. 2, pp. 104-105.

[2] This, what Burckhardt calls, "fanatic love" that Sufis and others claim for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), wherein they go beyond what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) even requested of them, is not a true or proper form of love whatsoever. They completely disregard what Allah or His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) request of them. In fact, to put it into modern terms, this kind of "love" is more akin to the kind of love that the stalker claims for the stalked. That kind of love is not appreciated by the stalked and similarly the latter kind of love is not approved or accepted by the Shareeah.

[3] Burckhardt, vol. 2, p. 106.

[4] See Burckhardt, vol. 2, pp. 180ff.

Two Recent Writings

As noted earlier in this chapter, "Wahhabism" has been receiving a great deal of attention lately. Two books have recently been published that proclaim to present the true story of "Wahhabism" and, particularly in one of them, its dangers for the rest of the world. These two works are Professor Hamid Algar's *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay*[1] and Stephen Schwartz's *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud from Tradition to Terror*.[2] These two works discuss many topics that are beyond the scope of this work and a detailed discussion of many of their claims would take a large number of pages; however, they do deserve more scrutiny than the earlier reviewed works, which were mostly of historical value.

Algar

Dr. Algar is a long-time professor at the University of California at Berkeley. In a lecture that this author attended at that university, Professor Algar introduced himself as being Ashari with respect to his beliefs, Hanafi with respect to his fiqh school and Naqshabandi with respect to his Sufi order. At the same time he was married to a Turkish wife and was outspoken in his pro-Shiite, pro-Khomeini stance.[3] Virtually, any one of these characteristics could

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[1] Hamid Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay* (Oneonta, NY: Islamic Publications International, 2002).

[2] Stephen Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud from Tradition to Terror* (New York: Doubleday, 2002).

[3] It was difficult for some to understand how Algar, a Sunni and Sufi, was so pro-Khomeini. Perhaps the following passages from Schwartz' work should shed some light on this point. Schwartz wrote, "Khomeini's authoritative biographer, Hamid Algar, has written, 'The aspiration to "pierce the veils of light and attain the source of magnificence" may… be regarded as a constant element in the devotional life of [Khomeini], and only by bearing it in mind can the totality of his struggles and achievements, including the political, be correctly understood.' Khomeini has studied and written on the *Bezels of Wisdom* by Ibn Arabi…" (Schwartz p. 148). Elsewhere, while discussing al-Hallaj, who was ordered put to death due to his heresies, Schwartz wrote, "Ayatollah Khomeini was also a highly unorthodox mystic who wrote poetry in which he said, 'I forget myself and proclaim, "I am the truth"; and like Mansur Hallaj I give myself up for execution.'" See Schwartz, p. 46. Schwartz (p. 165) also noted that Khomeini once sent a letter to Gorbachev, "in which he analyzed the weakness of Russian society as a product of atheism and recommended that Soviet scholars come to Iran to study the works of the philosophers Al-Farabi and Ibn

lead a person of lesser quality to have a very biased stance towards ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers. Indeed, Algar himself states towards the end of this book, "It will be abundantly clear to the attentive reader by now that the present writer has little liking or sympathy for Wahhabism."[1] However, the real question is whether or not he would be able to raise himself above those inclinations to produce a truly scholarly and objective work concerning Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

Algar begins by stating that the "Wahhabis" call themselves *Muwahhidun* "the asserters of the divine unity." Based on that, Algar makes the conclusion, "But precisely this self-awarded title springs from a desire to lay exclusive claim to the principle of *tauhid* that is the foundation of Islam itself; it implies a dismissal of all other Muslims as tainted by *shirk*."[2] There is no need to derive such conclusions and make such assumptions when the leaders of the call themselves have clearly pronounced that they do not consider all the Muslims outside of them to be non-Muslims or "tainted by *shirk*." Relevant quotes concerning this topic have already been given and shall not be repeated here.

Algar then tries to display the importance of the "Wahhabis" in Islamic thought. He calls them "intellectually marginal." If it were not that they were close to Makkah and Madinah and that they had the Saudi oil money, "Wahhabism might have well passed into history as a marginal and short-lived sectarian movement."[3] The discussion in Chapter 4, which highlights the influence of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab before the coming of the oil wealth, is a sufficient rejoinder

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Sina (Avicenna) and the Sufis Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi." (Interesting that no mention was made of studying the Quran or statements of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).) These facts may also shed some light on why Schwartz also seems to hate every Muslim except Sufis and some Shiites. It is also interesting to note that Schwartz (p. 56) argues that ibn Taimiyyah was imprisoned with the support of the scholars of his time due to his "extremist views" yet he never comments that Hallaj was put to death by the scholars of his time. This should imply that Hallaj was supra-extreme. In reality, the Shiahs and Sufis have always had a strong connection with each other. The interested reader should consult the two-volume study Kaamil Mustafa al-Shaibi, *al-Silah bain al-Tasawwuf wa al-Tashayya* (Beirut: Daar al-Andalus, 1982), *passim*.

[1] Algar, p. 67.

[2] Algar, p. 1.

[3] Algar, p. 2.

to this claim. One should not refer to a (so-called) "movement" that led to the reopening of the "door to *ijtihaad*" and made scholars reconsider their own positions in the light of the Quran and Sunnah as "intellectually marginal."

Algar then goes on to write,

> Wahhabism is an entirely specific phenomenon, calling for recognition as a separate school of thought or even as a sect of its own. Sometimes the Wahhabis are characterized, particularly by non-Muslim observers searching for a brief description, as "extreme" or as "conservative" Sunnis... It has, however, been observed by knowledgeable Sunnis since the earliest times that the Wahhabis do not count as part of the Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a, for almost all the practices, traditions and beliefs denounced by Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhab have been historically integral to Sunni Islam, enshrined in a vast body of literature and accepted by the great majority of Muslims. Precisely for that reason, many of the *'ulama* contemporary with the first emergence of Wahhabism denounced its followers as standing outside the pale of Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a.[1]

A number of points can be made here but the goal is to be brief. First, the fact that it was the "Wahhabis" who brought the people to prayer together behind one Imam instead of each school having its own Imam and prayer at the Kaabah should be a sufficient sign that they were not sectarians out to establish themselves as a separate entity. Second, he gives no mention of whom those "knowledgeable Sunnis" are who have declared the "Wahhabis" not part of the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*. One can only hope that he is not referring to the "scholars" discussed in the previous chapter who fabricated and distorted reality to come to their bogus conclusions, although from the references he mentions in his work one is forced to make that conclusion. In any case, when one reads Algar's passage closely, one sees that "Sunnism," or Algar's "Sunnism", has nothing to do with the Quran, the way of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or the way of his Companions. If Algar's Sunnism were based on the Quran and Sunnah, he would have mentioned that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab is refuting actions established by the Quran and Sunnah. He cannot say that because that would be an obvious lie. The only

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[1] Algar, pp. 2-3.

argument that he can make is that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab objected to "practices, traditions and beliefs… [that] have been historically integral to Sunni Islam, enshrined in a vast body of literature and accepted by the great majority of Muslims." This is a fancy way of saying nothing. It means that one follows the practices of one's forefathers regardless of whether they are sanctioned by the Quran and Sunnah. This is Sunnism according to Algar. If this is Sunnism, it actually implies that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself was not a Sunni. If that is the case, then there is no value in being a Sunni. Algar has done nothing but misrepresent what Sunnism is supposed to be about.

Algar moves on to the life of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He is very careful about applying the hadith concerning "disturbances and disorder and the generation of Satan"[1] to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and Najd. He says that in the hadith, with respect to divine blessings, "Najd compares unfavorably with such regions as Syria and Yemen."[2] Algar fails to realize that the Najd mentioned in the hadith is not the same Najd that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab came from, as was discussed in the previous chapter. In any case, he states that in the end it may be possible that this hadith has nothing to do with Wahhabism. But then he says, "Its occurrence in the hadith literature does convey a sense of foreboding with respect to this part of the Arabian peninsula and suggest that any movement originating there should be viewed with great caution."[3] Had Algar simply picked up virtually any commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari*, he would have been able to understand that he is making a claim that has no basis.

Algar speaks about ibn Taimiyyah's influence upon ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Then, about ibn Taimiyyah, he states, "It is not without reason that Donald P. Little once wrote an article entitled, 'Did Ibn Taiymiyya have a screw loose?'"[4] Algar does not bother to support his potshot at ibn Taimiyyah with any kind of evidence or logical reasoning. Prof. Algar knows full well that if such a publication had been refereed he would have been required to offer at least some

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[1] This hadith is an authentic hadith recorded by al-Bukhari. However, Algar (p. 5), after quoting this hadith, states about it, "if indeed authentic…"

[2] Algar, p. 5.

[3] Algar, p. 6.

[4] Algar, p. 9.

support for his statement about ibn Taimiyyah. Simply because this is a work meant for general audiences, does he not have to hold himself to academic standards and feels free to write anything he wishes? Relying on a Christian Orientalist, George Makdisi, Algar also claims that ibn Taimiyyah was an "initiate of the Qadiri *tariqa*." He says this to try to distance ibn Taimiyyah from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, who had no link with Sufism, and then he makes the conclusion, "Wahhabism is essentially a movement without pedigree; it came out of nowhere in the sense not only of emerging from the wastelands of Najd, but also its lack of substantial precedent in Islamic history."[1] This is an interesting description given by Algar. He says of a so-called "movement" that backs up virtually all—as can be seen by just a cursory reading of its literature—of its claims from the Quran, Sunnah, statements of the Companions and earliest scholars, and the writings in Hanbali fiqh as a "movement without pedigree."

Algar then moves on to declare ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings as valueless. He says that "all of his works are extremely light, in terms of both content and bulk."[2] Then Algar in a true flight of fancy writes about al-Faruqi's translation of *Kitaab al-Tauheed*,

> In order to justify his encomium for Muhammad b. ʻAbd al-Wahhab, al-Faruqi appended to his translation of each chapter of the *Kitab al-Tauhid* a list of "further issues" he drew up himself, implying that the author had originally discussed some of the "issues" arising from hadith in the book; he had not.[3]

It is sad and difficult to write this, but this passage clearly displays both Algar's ignorance and arrogance. Indeed, it displays his clear disrespect for the truth. This author is a graduate of UC Berkeley and knows full well that there are many copies of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's *Kitaab al-Tauheed*, as well as many commentaries on it, in the graduate library at UC Berkeley. In fact, there are thousands of copies of this book available throughout the world. If Algar, who reads Arabic, would have simply taken the time to check any of those copies he would have seen that those "further issues" that al-Faruqi listed were from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and not "drawn up" by al-Faruqi. To

[1] Algar, p. 10.
[2] Algar, p. 14.
[3] Algar, p. 15-16.

make matters worse, with what little knowledge Algar truly has of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings, he has the audacity and the arrogance to think himself capable of judging what came from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and what did not, with no scholarly basis for his conclusion whatsoever. Indeed, in the translation by al-Faruqi, there is no hint whatsoever that al-Faruqi added those "issues." Algar has simply decided that such is the case—and it does not seem that important to him if such is the reality or not.

Actually, Algar is aware of the collected works of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. However, he never bothered to ensure that he had all the volumes. He states, "it is unclear how many volumes the complete series comprises."[1] He writes that he has volumes one, two and four of the set. As is clear from his own statements, he actually only had volumes one and two of the collection of hadith of a legal nature by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and another volume with it. Yet with this amount of effort, Algar thought himself qualified to write a critical essay on Wahhabism and even to declare what is or is not part of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings.

After mentioning some of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings on pages 14 to 16, Algar still had the gall to write on page 17, "One has, indeed, the impression that Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhab regarded the authorial act as one more unauthorized innovation that for centuries had clouded the Muslim mind."[2] Can there be a more baseless conclusion? Furthermore, writing in itself is not the only standard to judge whether or not one is a great scholar, reformer or person of influence. In fact, Algar, who considers himself a Sufi, has decided to ignore the fact that there are many Sufis who never left much behind in the way of writings. As was mentioned earlier, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's true scholarship appears in his letters that he wrote. Algar seems to have no clue as to the importance or availability of that important material.

Moving on with ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's life, Algar claims that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab made his alliance with Muhammad ibn Saud "sealing it with another marriage."[3] This author could not find any

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[1] Algar, p. 16.
[2] Algar, p. 17.
[3] Algar, p. 19.

evidence to suggest that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab married one of ibn Saud's relatives.

On pages 20-21, Algar repeats claims made earlier that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers declared all non-Wahhabis non-Muslim and they were similar to the Khawarij. These types of allegations were discussed in the previous chapter.

In a rather lengthy passage, Algar proclaims to present the "Wahhabi" view and then quickly refute them. Due to the importance of this passage, it will be presented in virtually its entirety. Algar is discussing the concept of *tauheed al-ibaadah* or the concept that all acts of worship must be directed toward Allah, otherwise one may be falling into *shirk*. Algar then writes,

> Such violation takes place whenever an act of devotion involves, in any fashion at all, an entity other than the worshipper and God. The examples are numerous: petitionary prayer (*du'a*) in which mention is made of the Prophet or other exalted personages in the hope of gaining greater acceptability for one's supplication, by using a formulation such as *bi-hurmati...*; *isti'ana* and *istighatha*, seeking help in mundane or spiritual matters with a form of words that implies expectation of help from a given person, rather than from God, even if the person in question be implicitly viewed as a channel or transmitter of divine aid; *tawassul*, regarding a person, however exalted, as a means of facilitating one's approach to the divine presence; attributing life and agency to the dead by addressing them in a devotional context, even if not as the objects of one's devotion; the expectation of, or aspiration for, the *shafa'a* (intercession) of prophets, saints, martyrs, and other exalted personages; *tabarruk* (the seeking of blessings) at their tombs; *ziyara*, the visitation of those tombs as an act performed in its own right and with due intention; and the construction of domes or other elevated structures over such tombs. All of these result in a violation of *tauhid al-'ibada* and make of the offender a *mushrik*. To put it differently, *tauhid al-'ibada* can be defined only negatively, in terms of the avoidance of certain practices, not affirmatively; this places a fear of perceived deviation at the very heart of Wahhabism and helps to explain its intrinsically censorious nature. All the allegedly deviant practices just listed can, however, be vindicated with reference not only to tradition and consensus but also to hadith, as has been explained by those numerous scholars, Sunni and Shi'i alike, who have addressed the phenomenon of Wahhabism. Even if that were not the case, and the

> belief that *ziyara* and *tawassul* is valid and beneficial were to be false, there is no logical reason for condemning the belief as entailing exclusion from Islam...[1]

It is difficult to know where to start with a passage like this that has so much falsehood in it. First, he claims that anyone who performs any of the above-mentioned acts are *mushrik* (polytheist, outside of the fold of Islam) according to the "Wahhabis." This is simply and blatantly not true. At no time, for example, did ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or any of his followers declare a person a disbeliever simply because he "expected" or had "aspirations" for the prophets' or martyrs' intercession. Similarly, there is no place in which ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or his followers state that the visiting of a tomb or even the building of a mausoleum over it is an act of *shirk*. The latter, for example, is simply an act that leads to *shirk* and was, as such, prohibited by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab as it was prohibited by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) before him. Did ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or his followers declare the one who makes *tawassul* by mentioning the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) a disbeliever? On what basis is Algar making these claims? He himself offers no references. He does not refer to any writing of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or any of his numerous followers to support these claims.

Algar says in the passage above, "*All* the allegedly deviant practices just listed can, however, be vindicated with reference not only to tradition and consensus[2] but also to hadith." He is claiming that *all* of those acts can be justified by reference to hadith. Of course, he offers no proof for that. Not one hadith is quoted to support such a claim and not even one reference is given who, one could assume, provides those hadith. Is he trying to imply that there is a hadith in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or one of his Companions sought help in a spiritual manner from someone in a grave? If a man is not careful about what he claims is found in the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), it is not surprising that he is not careful in what he says about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

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[1] Algar, pp. 32-34.
[2] How he makes the claim to consensus is yet another miracle.

In the above passage, Algar stated, “To put it differently, *tauhid al-‘ibada* can be defined only negatively, in terms of the avoidance of certain practices, not affirmatively; this places a fear…” If only Algar would have turned to the writings of the person he is supposedly writing about, he would know that that statement is nothing but an untruth. Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself wrote, “If it is asked: What would be an exhaustive definition of worship of Allah alone? I say: Obedience to Him by implementing His commands and avoiding His prohibitions. If it is said: What are the forms of worship that are not proper save only for Allah? I say: From those forms are supplication, seeking rescue, slaughtering a sacrificial animal, making an oath, having fear, having hope, having trust and reliance, repenting, love, awe, desire, fear, grand esteem, bowing, prostrating, submission, grand honoring that is exclusive to God…”[1] If Algar is upset about the negative, he should consider the formula by which one becomes a Muslim. It is first a denial and then an affirmation. Is Algar displeased with Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that they have stated and defined the entrance into Islam “only negatively.” Furthermore, is it not true that what ibn Abdul-Wahhaab states, “That there are no prayers to be said except to Allah, no fasts to be offered except for Allah, no animal sacrifices to be made except in Allah’s name…” is simply a restatement with practical examples of the testimony of faith? The fact is that one has to remove the wrong and avoid the evils. Should he also not consider what Allah has clearly stated—beginning with the negative—

فَمَن يَكۡفُرۡ بِٱلطَّٰغُوتِ وَيُؤۡمِنۢ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدِ ٱسۡتَمۡسَكَ بِٱلۡعُرۡوَةِ ٱلۡوُثۡقَىٰ لَا ٱنفِصَامَ لَهَاۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

“Whoever disbelieves in false gods and believes in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower” (*al-Baqarah* 256). Again, is Prof. Algar’s problem truly with ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or it is in reality with the Quran and Islam itself?

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, p. 279.

At the end of the above passage, Algar states, "Even if that were not the case, and the belief that *ziyara* and *tawassul* is valid and beneficial were to be false, there is no logical reason for condemning the belief as entailing exclusion from Islam." This is a classic example of a straw man fallacy: Algar is erecting an erroneous claim and then refuting it. At no time did ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or his followers say that simply visiting a grave (*ziyara*) or even *tawassul* (assuming he means by that invoking the right of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for example) are actions that entail "exclusion from Islam."[1] Furthermore, it is interesting to note that in this passage, Algar only mentions *ziyara* and *tawassul*. Maybe he himself is admitting that the other acts that he had mentioned, such as "*isti'ana* and *istighatha*, seeking help in mundane or spiritual matters with a form of words that implies expectation of help from a given person, rather than from God," can indeed be shown to take one out of the fold of Islam.

On the following page after the above passage, Algar then goes on to discuss the Wahhabi teachings concerning innovations. He does not seem to care for the "Wahhabi" approach that all innovations are misguidance. Of course, at no time does he quote the hadith,

وإياكُم ومحدثَات الأُمورِ فَإن كُل بِدعة ضلالَةٌ

"Avoid newly-introduced matters. Verily, every heresy is a going astray."[2] Instead, Algar writes, "Broader and more positive understandings are, however, to be encountered. The Shafii scholar 'Izz al-Din b. 'Abd as-Salam was, for example, of the opinion that it is permissible to speak of a *bid'a hasana*, 'a good innovation,' and that

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[1] Al-Saabiq (p. 286) wrote, "The opponents of the 'Wahhabis' and their brethren claim that the 'Wahhabis' say that *tawassul* by the status of the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and visiting his honorable grave are acts of *shirk* and negate *tauheed*. That is a lie and a fabrication from the opponents. In fact, the 'Wahhabis' and their brethren simply say that *tawassul* by the status of any of the creation is something that neither Allah or His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sanctioned and the Companions and the Followers after them never did it… Hence, it is a rejected act [and type of innovation]."

[2] This hadith is *sahih*. It was recorded, with slightly different wordings, by Ahmad, Abu Daawood, al-Tirmidhi, ibn Hibbaan, ibn Abu Aasim, al-Baihaqi, al-Haakim and a number of others. For details concerning the grading of this hadith, see Zarabozo, *Commentary*, vol. 2, pp. 1044-1046.

legally all forms of *bid'a* fall into five groups: obligatory, recommended, permissible, discouraged and forbidden."[1]

The question that arises from this passage is: What is Algar trying to imply by this statement? On the next page, he gives some examples of supposed *bid'a* that are not reprehensible in his eyes: "The list includes but is not restricted to the various forms of *dhikr* and other rituals practised by the Sufi orders; popular customs associated with religiously significant dates, such as the two Ids… any commemoration of the birthday of the Prophet…"[2] Are these the kind of "good innovations" that would supposedly be approved by scholars like 'Izz al-Din ibn Abdul-Salaam, as opposed to someone like ibn Abdul-Wahhaab? This is a very unfair way of leading into a defense of indefensible practices. Just because there are some scholars who approve of dividing *bid'a* or innovations into the five categories mentioned above, that does not mean that they would accept practices that Algar describes. Take for example the scholar that he explicitly mentioned, 'Izz al-Din ibn Abdul-Salaam.[3] Could there be any relationship between ibn Abdul-Salaam and the innovations that Algar mentions on his next page? It seems that ibn Abdul-Salaam's views, even if he divides innovations into the above five categories, are actually very close to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's. Thus, al-Izz ibn Abdul Salaam once stated that one should not say prayers upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) at the end of the *qunoot* (the special supplications made during the Witr prayer).[4] He also explicitly declared as simple an act as shaking hands after the Morning and Afternoon prayers a *bidah* (innovation).[5] Furthermore, al-Izz also concluded that to invoke a part of the creation while swearing by Allah is absolutely forbidden.[6] He also said that it is

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[1] Algar, p. 35.
[2] Algar, p. 36.
[3] Incidentally, in referring to 'Iz al-Din ibn Abdul-Salaam, Algar did not actually refer to any of ibn Abdul-Salaam's works but relied on an article written in Turkish. Hence, it is very possible that Algar does not even know what ibn Abdul-Salaam truly believed.
[4] Quoted in Fauzi ibn Muhammad al-Shabtah, *Mausooah al-Salaah al-Saheehah* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Taubah, 2000), vol. 2, p. 940.
[5] Al-Izz ibn Abdil-Salaam, *al-Fataawa al-Mausiliyyah* (Beirut: Daar al-Fikr al-Muaasir, 1999), p. 34.
[6] See al-Ruwaishid, vol. 1, p. 116.

forbidden to make *tawassul* by any of Allah's creation.[1] In fact, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's beliefs are virtually the same as those of al-Izz ibn Abdul-Salaam. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab once wrote, "We refrain from every innovation save for the innovation that has some source for it in the Law, such as combining the Quran into one book, Umar gathering the Companions in a congregation for the *taraweeh* (late night prayers of Ramadhaan)…"[2] These are the kinds of "innovations" that al-Izz accepts. Finally, Abdullah, son of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, stated that if one wants to call such "good things" as *bidah* in a figurative sense, then there is nothing wrong with that although the better and more correct approach is to use that term only while referring to unacceptable acts.[3] Algar's choice of al-Izz ibn Abdul-Salaam seems to be a poor choice because, although he divides *bidah* into five categories, his understanding of *bidah* is still the same as that of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and of his son Abdullah.

On page 37, he repeats the famous claim that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab considered that the Muslims were not upon anything of value for the past six hundred years or more. Although Algar does not reference any of these statements, one of the few relevant references that he mentions in his bibliography is Dahlaan and it was probably from him that Algar got much of his baseless information.

On pages 38-39, to his credit, Algar does debunk the claim that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was an English spy. He discusses a work that is supposedly the memoirs of a British agent in the Middle East, a "Mr. Hempher." These memoirs claim that the "Wahhabi movement" was nothing but a British plot. Algar concludes that most likely the author of this work was a Shiite. It is good that Algar debunked this pure fabrication. However, it is interesting to note Algar's attitude toward this fabricator as opposed to his attitude toward ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and others. Algar has no harsh words for the fabricator. Instead of castigating this fabricator for the work that he did, Algar seems more disappointed that he did not do his work in a good enough manner. Thus, he simply concludes about the author, "He would have done better to leave the task of refuting Wahhabism

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[1] Al-Ruwaishid, vol. 1, p. 123.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 107.
[3] Al-Ruwaishid, vol. 1, pp. 140-141.

to scholars such as Shaykh Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita."[1] This is very sad indeed. Even if ibn Abdul-Wahhaab were the most evil of all people, that does not give anyone the right to lie and spread fabrications about him. This is nothing but a violation of the Islamic concept of justice and rights.

Much of the rest of his work is beyond the scope of this present work. However, there are three appendices of interest. The first is a short passage from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's *Kashf al-Shubuhaat*, the second a short passage from Dahlaan's critique of "Wahhabism," and the third is a short passage from the Shiite Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita.

He introduces ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writing with a short passage wherein he is very upset that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab claimed that the Arabs at the time of Ignorance understood the concept of Allah being only one God but that they had fallen into believing in intermediaries.[2] Once again, though, it seems that Algar's true problems lie with what the verses of the Quran state and have very little to do with ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, who simply restated what is explicit in the Quran.

Algar tries to show that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab contradicts himself. After quoting the passage which says that the polytheists called upon God and upon others at times of ease, Algar wrote a footnote, "This sentence seems to contradict the statement contained in the opening of the second paragraph of this extract."[3] He is referring to the following passage—and this is Algar's own translation—"The first is that the ancients did not, in times of prosperity, assign partners to God nor did they call on angels, sacred personages (*al-awliya`*), and idols."[4] The reason there is a contradiction is because Algar has totally mistranslated that passage. That passage reads,

أحدها أن الأول لا يشركون ولا يدعون ا لائكة والأولياء والأوثان مع ا إلا الرخاء

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[1] Algar, p. 39.
[2] Cf., Algar, p. 71.
[3] Algar, p. 75.
[4] Algar, p. 74.

The correct translation, using Algar's terms, should be, "The first is that the ancients did not commit *shirk* nor did they call upon the angels, sacred personages or idols *except during times of ease*."[1] In fact, the remainder of the passage, especially the verses of the Quran he quotes, makes it very clear that this is what ibn Abdul-Wahhaab said. Thus even if there were an error in Algar's copy, its meaning is clear from the rest of the text. It cannot be known whether this completely faulty translation was due to a mistake in the text that he used, intentional or simply a mistake on Algar's part. Given the tenor of his work, there is no reason, unfortunately, to assume any good intention on his part. However, it seems that Algar never gave this work of his much scholarly effort and most likely he simply mistranslated this portion (he may have been overjoyed to later find that it implied a contradiction on ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's part). Allah knows best.

It is very interesting to note that in his second appendix, a passage from Dahlaan, Dahlaan seems to be implying a tomb worship that Algar had earlier denied occurred among the Muslims. Much of this passage from Dahlaan is the same false propaganda that was discussed from him in the previous chapter. Dahlaan wrote,

> [ibn Abdul-Wahhaab] went so far as to declare the believers unbelievers. He claimed that visiting the tomb of the Prophet—upon whom be peace and blessings—as well as appealing to him or other prophets and righteous person as intermediaries (*al-tawassul*) or visiting their tombs constituted *shirk* [the assignation of partners to God]. He also denounced as *shirk* addressing the prophets, the saints and the righteous *while appealing to them*,[2] and attributing anything to other than God, even if by way of rational metaphor.[3]

The last appendix and "refutation" of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab comes from the Shiite Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita. Algar opens this

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, vol. 1, p. 169; Al-Ruwaishid, vol. 1, p. 283. Emphasis added.

[2] Emphasis added. Earlier Algar had written (p. 34, fn. 27), "It is interesting to note in passing that much nonsense has been written by Western scholars on what they term 'tomb worship' or 'the worship of saints' in the Muslim world, thus implicitly accepting the Wahhabi thesis that to visit and offer a prayer at a tomb, *although not to its occupant*, somehow constitutes a form of worship of the tomb." (Emphasis added.)

[3] Algar, p. 78.

refutation with a passage greatly praising its author. The passage is less than three pages and actually does not have much to offer and the greatest evidence it presents in refuting ibn Abdul-Wahhaab is the following,

> It will be appropriate to cite here what has been narrated here by al-Qutaybi. He relates that he was once sitting next to the tomb of the Messenger of God—peace and blessings be upon him—when a Bedouin came, offered his salutations to the Messenger, and then recited these verses: "O best and greatest of those ever buried in the earth, who have made it fragrant with their perfume, May my soul be ransom for the tomb in which you dwell, for there lie purity, and generosity, and nobility." The Bedouin then said: "Here I am, o Messenger of God; I have wronged myself. I seek forgiveness of God and I ask you, o Messenger of Allah, that you seek forgiveness for me." Al-Qutaybi relates that he then fell asleep, and dreamed that the Prophet told him: "O Qutaybi, find the Bedouin, and give him the glad tidings that God has forgiven him." He accordingly rose and gave the Bedouin the good news.[1]

Is this the kind of "strong Shareeah arguments" that Algar is pleased to present as his only refutation of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab? When people start relying on dreams and stories of this nature and simply forget everything the Quran and Sunnah have to offer, one could argue that the room for discussion has practically vanished.

This is actually typical of what one finds as a refutation of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. Algar calls his work a critical essay. One would expect that he critiques and appraises ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's beliefs and teachings. From a Muslim perspective, one would expect that this work will be then filled with verses of the Quran and hadith, demonstrating the ignorance of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's way. In fact, in all of Algar's work, some 84 pages of text, there is reference to only two hadith. One was the hadith that Algar misinterpreted concerning Najd and the second one is in relation to the coming of a revivalist every one hundred years, that Algar refers to as "a certain hadith."[2] Actually, perhaps more astounding, in this work in which Algar critiques the Wahhabis and in which he presents two appendices refuting the Wahhabis, there is not one verse of the Quran

[1] Algar, pp. 83-84.
[2] Algar, pp. 36-37.

mentioned—except in the first appendix, which is a translation from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings. In fact, Algar perhaps should be thanked for he truly exposed the difference between ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his opponents: ibn Abdul-Wahhaab relies on the revelation from Allah (the Quran and the Sunnah) while the others rely on dreams, practices of Muslims and so forth, anything but the true revelation. Furthermore, if any non-Arabic reader had any doubt concerning the types of material that are published concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab even from Muslims, Algar has presented an excellent example of such propaganda being passed on as a "critical essay."

In sum, Algar might be sincere in his beliefs but he did not do the efforts required for an academic work. This is very unfair, especially with respect to a fellow Muslim. At the outset Algar's biases were mentioned. It was asked whether he would be able to raise himself above those biases and produce an objective and scholarly work. Unfortunately, it is clear that his work has left much to be desired—to say the least.

One has to ask what was Algar's intention behind writing a book of this nature. Can he truly claim that his sole intention was to please Allah? Do the efforts that he seemed to have put into this work—or not put into this work—testify to any claim that it was done with a sincere intention? If it were not written with a sincere intention, then what other intention must he have had? Allah alone knows the truth behind questions of that nature. However, one can only hope that Allah guides Prof. Algar to the path of repentance and seeking forgiveness for the unfair and uncalled for[1] words that he has stated concerning a fellow human and a fellow Muslim.

[1] One can only hope that Prof. Algar is not one of those Sufis who believes in having love for Allah and not in having fear of Allah. Unfortunately, though, it can be argued that only someone who has no fear of Allah could have knowingly written the kind of falsehood found in his work.

Schwartz

Stephen Schwartz is a Jewish author who pictures himself as some kind of Naqshabandi Sufi.[1] As was the case with Algar[2], this does not *a priori* mean that he cannot rise above his tendencies to produce an objective, scholarly work. He has written a work entitled *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud from Tradition to Terror*. This book is being widely propagated in the United States. This author has found seven or eight copies always available in the major bookstores in the United States. Furthermore, its author has made numerous appearances on "news shows" in the Western media. Hence, although much of Schwartz's book is beyond the realm of this work, the portions of his work that most directly concern ibn Abdul-Wahhaab "deserve" some study.[3]

Schwartz tries to present himself as someone very sympathetic to Islam.[4] His main hypothesis, as is clear from the title of the work, is that there are "two faces of Islam." In a somewhat surprising approach, he dates these two all the way back to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), even picturing the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as somewhat confused or, at worst, schizophrenic. He describes the early Muslims who fled to Ethiopia to escape persecution in Makkah. Then he writes,

> Though he remained behind, Muhammad supported this venture, which marked the first instance of a recurrent motif in Islam: the emigration of believers to escape persecution. It is here that in the Prophet's own life, the two faces of Islam were first seen: separation, which would inevitably encourage purism and extremism, versus entry into the world, even under difficult conditions, leading to pluralism and tolerance.[5]

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[1] In his acknowledgements, he wrote (pp. 288-289), "I owe even more to Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani of the Most Distinguished Naqshbandi Order of Sufis, very beloved teacher and friend, whose companionship freed my heart, may the blessings of merciful Allah (swt) always be upon him."

[2] Schwartz quotes Algar on a few occasions. In fact, when reading their "logic" and arguments, the two of them seem virtually interchangeable.

[3] Chapter 3 is his chapter that is most dedicated to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and most relevant here.

[4] In reality, he has no kind words for any type of Muslim, branding them all "Wahhabis," except for the Sufis and the Shiites.

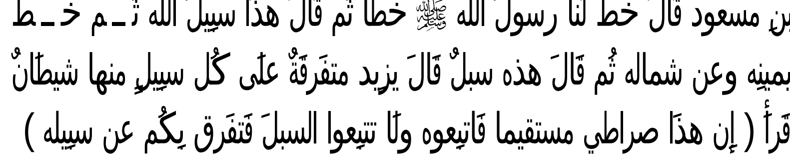
[5] Schwartz, p. 11.

In this work, he makes it clear that he supports the "pluralistic version of Islam" propagated by his Sufi companions. However, note that in this passage he is saying that the move that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) "supported" is the kind of Islam that leads to "purism and extremism." Thus, from the outset, he is doubting the Prophet's own decision. He is trying to say that there are two versions of Islam and the Muslims have to choose the right one. Well, already, it seems that the right "version" of Islam may even contradict what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself supported and did.

In reality, Schwartz' hypothesis is incorrect and there is only one true Islam and the Muslims do not have any choice but to follow that truth. This true Islam is the way of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), which is the true and only correct implementation of the Quran. Allah says,

وَأَنَّ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطِى مُسْتَقِيمًا فَٱتَّبِعُوهُ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا۟ ٱلسُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِۦ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّىٰكُم بِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

"And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not (other) paths, for they will separate you away from His Path. This He has ordained for you that you may become pious" (*al-Anaam* 153). Note the Prophet's explanation of this verse,



عن عبد الله بن مسعود قال خط لنا رسول الله ﷺ خطا ثم قال هذا سبيل الله ثم خط خطوطا عن يمينه وعن شماله ثم قال هذه سبل قال يزيد متفرقة على كل سبيل منها شيطان يدعو إليه ثم قرأ (إن هذا صراطي مستقيما فاتبعوه ولا تتبعوا السبل فتفرق بكم عن سبيله)

Abdullah ibn Masood said, "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) drew for us a line and then he said, 'That is the path of Allah.' Then he drew lines to the right and to the left of it and he said, 'These are—Yazeed the subnarrator said various—paths. Upon each such path is a devil calling towards it. Then he recited the

verse, ‘This is My Straight Path, so follow it. Follow not other ways, as you will then stray from His Way’ [*al-Anaam* 153].”[1]

One of the points that Schwartz tries valiantly to make is that the moderate Muslims understand the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and see him as “sensible, calm, humble, and kind…” On the other hand, according to him,

> Islamic extremists seek to remove Muhammad from Islam altogether. To Westerners, this seems impossible. But it is true: Islamic fundamentalists ignore the personality of the Prophet and oppose traditional Muslims’ love and admiration of his quest for compassion. As we will see, a wholesale purge of the Prophet’s personality from Islamic religion has been an essential goal of the “end time” cult of Wahhabism, which has made a serious attempt to reshape Islam in its intolerant image.[2]

From the beginning Schwartz claims that the Wahhabis try to distance the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from Islam. One has to first know the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) before one can distance him from Islam. If it is anyone who knows the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) it is those people who study the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his authentic statements, such as ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers. It is not those who rely upon fabricated hadith, dreams or seances in which they claim to learn from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) (like the Sufis that Schwartz is very fond of). So if anyone is bringing the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) back into Islam, it is the “Wahhabis” or *Salafi*s.

Actually, Schwartz himself makes it very clear who is trying to divorce the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from Islam. Schwartz (pages 157-158) describes what he refers to as “a delirious commentary” in which someone named Amir Sulaiman listed the rewards promised the martyrs in Paradise. At no point does he mention that the eight sayings he quoted are directly from hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), well-known even to the Sufis of old. This shows that his real problem, like that of Algar, is not with any call or leader

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[1] Recorded by Ahmad. Its chain is *hasan*. See the discussion in Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., *Musnad al-Imaam Ahmad* (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risaalah, 1996), vol. 7, pp. 207-209.

[2] Schwartz, p. 9.

but is with the Quran and Sunnah. Thus, one will find him quoting, again like Algar, not one Quranic verse to support his version of Islam as opposed to the teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

It seems that Schwartz is trying to present himself as a peace-loving, pluralistic, borderline Sufi. Yet his arrogance and prejudice towards others of the human race comes across in one of his first statements about ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He writes, "He emerged from an emptiness that was not only physical and economic but social, intellectual and spiritual… It is also said that in early adulthood Ibn Abd al-Wahhab traveled widely, to Basra and Baghdad, to Damascus, and through Kurdistan, Iran, and India, intending to become a merchant. But how would an unsophisticated, narrow-minded wanderer from Najd have seen himself and his surroundings…"[1]

He then claims that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab ran into an Englishman who "encouraged him to personal ambition." "Soon, the intinerant Arab and the imperial British shared a goal: the liquidation of the Ottoman Empire."[2] He then says that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab rebelled against the Ottoman caliphate. Even Algar had the decency to recognize that all this is pure fancy and nonsense. As was discussed earlier, there is no evidence and no reason to proclaim that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab ever had any intentions with respect to the Ottoman Empire.

On pages 69-71, he goes on to describe some of the beliefs and practices of the Wahhabis. It is too lengthy to quote verbatim here. Some selections will be presented here. First, he claims that according to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, "ritual is superior to intentions."[3] This is a baseless claim and, of course, Schwartz offers no reference for it, either in ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings or in anybody's writings.

He describes a third main point of Wahhabi teachings as, "[T]here can be no intercessory prayer, addressed to God by means of the Prophet or saints… Prayers to God by means of a pious person or even honors to any individual other than God were condemned as idolatry, despite their acceptance by all previous generations of Muslims and the Prophet himself."[4] First, as noted earlier, not all acts of this nature are condemned as idolatry. Some are simply considered

[1] Schwartz, pp. 66-67.
[2] Schwartz, p. 67.
[3] Schwartz, p. 69.
[4] Schwartz, p. 69.

forbidden and some are forbidden because they are means that may eventually lead to idolatry. His claim that all previous generations of Muslims and even the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself approved of such claims is nothing but falsehood. At the very least, he should have provided at least one hadith to show that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) approved of such acts.

In a blatant act of lying, he states that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab "ascribed a human form to God."[1] This ridiculous statement is not even deserving of a comment.

He then states, "Ibn Abd al-Wahhab further condemned as unbelievers those who did not observe all the prescribed times of prayer, a position absent from traditional Islam."[2] As was noted earlier, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab himself specifically refrained from making the judgment about those who did not pray because, as he said, the scholars had differed on that issue. His statement, "a position absent from traditional Islam," may make the reader believe that no earlier scholars held that position. Actually, some scholars have always held that position. But what he means by "traditional Islam" is actually only the traditional practices of the Sufis, whether they be ignorant or not.

Schwartz also says, "He demanded that the Muslim profession of faith be made a second time, as an adherent to his Wahhabi sect."[3] Again, this is pure falsehood that Schwartz does not reference whatsoever.[4]

Schwartz then mentions some of the acts, which in ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's views are *bidah* or innovations, that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab opposed, although he has a tendency to embellish the picture or not give the entire picture. For example, he states that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab "condemned the habit of those making *hajj* in Mecca to visit the Prophet's tomb in Medina."[5]

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[1] Schwartz, p. 69.
[2] Schwartz, p. 69.
[3] Schwartz, p. 69.
[4] It is easy to write without having to reference one's material, as then one can write whatever one wishes to write. Indeed, in that case, one can even include material from the most unreliable of sources.
[5] Schwartz, p. 70.

Then Schwartz writes,

> Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's doctrines explicitly downgrade the status of Muhammad. Yet he claimed to live a life so close to the exemplary *Sirah* of Muhammad that he could stand as a peer to the Prophet himself. It seems clear that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab saw himself as an equal of the Prophet, a view that is also thoroughly heretical in Islam. Some critics assert that he even saw himself as surpassing the Prophet. But, above all, for Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's radical interpretation of Islam to gain followers, the Prophet's personality, and especially his dedication to compassion and mercy, had to be amputated from the body of Muslim doctrine.[1]

This is classic Schwartz perverse reasoning. The person who most promoted the following of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in every aspect was trying to downgrade the status of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It was Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab who wrote, "From here we recognize the necessity above all necessities: the individual has to know the Messenger and what he came with. There is no path to success except upon his hands. Nor is there any way to distinguish the good from the evil except through his means of distinguishing them. The person's necessity to know the Messenger is greatly above any other need that is hypothesized and any other necessity that is presented."[2] Do these sound like the words of a man who is trying to surpass the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or a man who is calling all to submit to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

The rest of the passage again is not worth commenting on. However, it is curious to note that throughout his work, Schwartz is claiming that the dangerous "Wahhabism" is sweeping the Muslim world. Is this truly possible by removing all remnants of compassion and mercy from the message of Islam?

In the next paragraph, Schwartz simply repeats some of the false propaganda against ibn Abdul-Wahhaab that was discussed in Chapter 5. He says that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab "preached abandonment of the four traditions," meaning the four schools of fiqh. He claims that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab denounced all non-Wahhabis as non-

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[1] Schwartz, p. 70.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 6, p. 13.

Muslims. He even writes that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab "abused the prophets, scholars, saints, and other pious figures of the past."[1] Any writer who expects to be taken seriously would at least present one quote from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to support this wild assertion. But, of course, Schwartz does not. He then goes on to quote some of al-Zahawi's statements that were dealt with in the previous chapter.

Schwartz then writes, "The Wahhabi call for 'reform' had no support in the *Sunna*. In his predictions of the future, which were many, Muhammad never once forecast that the Muslims would fall back into polytheism, as Wahhabis have strenuously accused them of doing since the 18th Century."[2] Had he even referred to the collections of hadith available in English or even the books regarding the signs of the Day of Judgment available in English, he may have learned differently. But, alas, there is not one collection of hadith mentioned in his bibliography. He also does not list any major reference book in Arabic. Amazingly, he does not even reference any book written by Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab or any of his descendants—yet he claims to be writing about them. It is therefore not surprising that it seems on many occasions that he makes statements that are simply untrue.[3] Given his extremely limited accessibility to the sources of hadith, at the very least, Schwartz should have said, "I am not aware of any hadith in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said that Muslims would revert to polytheism."

Actually, all he had to do was to read ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's own *Kitaab al-Tauheed* or any of its commentaries and he would find the chapter, "What has come concerning part of the Nation worshipping idols." This chapter demonstrates that even among those who say, "There is no one worthy of worship except Allah," there will be some who will revert to *shirk*. Thaubaan narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

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[1] Schwartz, p. 71.
[2] Schwartz, p. 71.
[3] He does however list 57 of his own little writings and articles in his bibliography.

إنما أخاف علَى أُمتي الْأئمةَ الْمضلِّين وإِذَا وضع في أُمتي السيف لَم يرفَع عنهم إِلَى يومِ الْقيامة ولا تقُوم الساعةُ حتى يلْحق قَبائلُ من أُمتي بِالْمشرِكين حتى تعبد قَبائلُ من أُمتي الْأَوثَانَ

"I fear for this Nation of mine the leaders who misguide people. If the sword comes upon my Nation, it will not be removed from it until the Day of Resurrection. The Hour will not be established until tribes of my Nation join with the polytheists and until tribes of my Nation worship the idols."[1]

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said,

لا تقُوم الساعةُ حتى تضطَرِب أَلَيات نِساءِ دوسٍ علَى ذي الْخلَصة وذُو الْخلَصة طَاغيةُ دوسٍ التي كَانوا يعبدونَ في الْجاهلية

"The Hour will not be established until the buttocks of the women of the tribe of Daus move while going around Dhul-Khalasa [the idol of the Daus tribe in the Time of Ignorance]." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)[2]

The next sentence after the above quote from Schwartz reads, "The Prophet believed that 'at the head of every century Allah would send someone who would *revive* the faith,' as opposed to reforming it."[3] In the light of the previous passage, this passage seems almost humorous. The word *tajdeed* or "*revive*," as he put it in italics, exactly supports ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's contention. One cannot "revive" something unless it existed and had for the most part been lost.

[1] Recorded by Abu Dawood, ibn Maajah and Ahmad. Hamzah Ahmad al-Zain says, "Its chain is *sahih*… Al-Haithami said, 'The narrators of Ahmad are narrators of the *Sahih*.'" According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See Hamzah Ahmad al-Zain, footnotes to Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal, *Al-Musnad* (Cairo: Daar al-Hadeeth, 1995), vol. 16, p. 294; Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami al-Sagheer* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1986), vol. 2, pp. 1236-1237.

[2] Actually Schwartz was not the first to oppose ibn Abdul-Wahhaab with such a claim. Indeed, ibn Afaaliq, Sulaiman ibn ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, al-Qabbani, al-Muwais and others claimed that the Muslim Nation is protected into falling into error and, hence, it is nonsense to claim that *shirk* has become widespread among the Muslims. See the quotes from them in al-Abdul-Lateef, pp. 219-221.

[3] Schwartz, p. 70.

Tauheed had existed and had been lost in the wave of idolatrous practices that the Muslims had fallen into. This was exactly ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's point. He was not reforming it, he was "reviving" it. Perhaps, Mr. Schwartz should be thanked for pointing that out.

Schwartz then rambles on about the "Wahhabis" opposition to music. This is truly something heartbreaking for Schwartz. This is not the proper place to discuss this matter in detail. However, two statements from Schwartz should be sufficient to demonstrate how this man is prone to exaggeration without much concern for truth. He writes, "Music is perhaps the greatest glory of Islamic civilization… Islam without music would be like God without his creation, Earth."[1]

Schwartz then goes on to discuss the hadith about Najd, discussed in the last chapter. It is interesting that this is one of only a couple of hadith that Schwartz ever quotes. It is also interesting to note that Schwartz had the audacity to write, "Ibn Abd al-Wahhab *may not have been* the Antichrist, or *Dajjal*, as this figure is known in Islam, but he was something equally fearsome."[2] In all fairness, he should have at least noted that Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab comes from the well-known tribe of Tameem, mentioned in the hadith:

عن أَبِي هريرةَ قَالَ ما زِلْت أُحب بنِي تميمٍ منذُ ثَلاث سمعت من رسولِ الله صلى اللهم علَيه وسلم يقُولُ فيهم سمعته يقُولُ هم أَشد أُمتي علَى الدجالِ قَالَ وجاءَت صدقَاتهم فَقَالَ رسولُ الله صلى اللهم علَيه وسلم هذه صدقَات قَومنا وكَانت سبِيةٌ منهم عند عائشةَ فَقَالَ أَعتقيها فَإِنها من ولَد إِسماعيلَ

Abu Hurairah said, "I have continued to love the Tribe of Tameem ever since I heard three statements from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) about them. I heard him say, 'They are the strongest of my Nation against the *dajjaal* (anti-Christ).' When their Zakat came, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'This is the zakat of my people.' Aishah had a slave-girl from them and he said, 'Free her for she is from the descendants of Ismaaeel.'" (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

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[1] Schwartz, pp. 72-73.

[2] Emphasis added. Schwartz, p. 74.

While speaking about the alliance between ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and Muhammad ibn Saud, Schwartz wrote, "Their true aim was conquest and world domination. For his part, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab imagined himself a new Prophet who would replace the Ottoman caliph as the sole theological authority within the global Islamic *ummah*."[1] If, somehow, Schwartz has access to the world of the unseen and people's inner intentions, then not much can be said about this. Otherwise, the man who virtually retired from politics after the defeat of Riyadh to concentrate on writing and teaching can hardly be described in the fashion that he described him.

Actually, later Schwartz claims that in 1787, "Ibn Abd al-Wahhab declared himself leader of the worldwide *ummah*. This insanity was backed by a *fatwa* in which Ibn Abd al-Wahhab ordered '*jihad'* against the Ottomans."[2] As has been stressed elsewhere in this book, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings have been meticulously preserved and readily available. Where can this be found and why is there no direct quote ever presented from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab in which he made any such statements?

Finally, it is clear what type of Islam Schwartz and those many people like him—many of whom are within the Muslim community—desire. It is not an Islam that is truly rooted in the Quran and Sunnah—this is clear from Schwartz's work that contain no verses or hadith to support his "version" of Islam. Instead, as he states in his preface, he wants the West to "rally traditional Muslims in a way that contributes to a new pluralism and stability in the Islamic global community."[3] Yes, it is the "traditional Muslims" that he is looking for. It is not important whether those "traditions" are correct according to the Quran and Sunnah. From this can be understood the great enmity and hatred that has filled this man's heart toward ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and toward any Muslim who is attempting to apply the Quran and Sunnah. It is, in fact, people like these with their false and lie-filled presentations of Islam that are going to produce more harm than good for the entire world.[4]

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[1] Schwartz, p. 74.
[2] Schwartz, p. 79.
[3] Schwartz, p. xxii.
[4] Unfortunately, it is the twisted and fabricated thoughts of people like Schwartz that some right-wing Christians—the so-called spreaders of the "message of

In addition to the above false statements concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, there are numerous statements in this work that have no basis in fact (many of them being outside the scope of this work). Perhaps Schwartz is hoping to prey upon the possible ignorance of the American reading public. This is the only way to explain his extremely outlandish claims in which every non-Sufi, non-Shiite is part of some worldwide Wahhabi conspiracy (even the Hizb al-Tahreer and Tablighi Jamaat[1]). For Americans who are not very familiar with Islamic issues, it should be enough for them to read Schwartz' comments on Marin County. This passage[2], in which he says, among many other things, that San Francisco "produces little of lasting importance," should be enough to show exactly how smug and opinionated Schwartz is. Even the Supreme Court did not escape this man's vengeful tongue. On page 238, he actually states, "Years of wrongheaded decisions were handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court."

In fact, his book reads much more like a novel or a soap opera, wherein Schwartz is more than happy to provide the reader with exactly what was going on the minds and hearts of people and where the "heroes" are perfect saints and the "villains" are completely evil people. For example, Schwartz[3] praises the military jihad of the Sufi Shamil against Russian imperialism as an embodiment of the "beautiful, good" jihad while the jihad (supposedly the Wahhabi jihad) in the Bengal against British imperialism is described as an evil jihad showing the other face of Islam.[4]

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love"—are spreading in their media. These kinds of things are only going to produce hatred: hatred by the Christians for the "backward and evil Muslims" and hatred by the Muslims for the lying and hypocritical Christians. In fact, Schwartz was highlighted on Pat Robertson's station in a program about Wahhabism on August 18, 2002.

[1] Cf., Schwartz, pp. 211-213 and 253 respectively

[2] Schwartz, pp. 250-252.

[3] Schwartz, pp. 83-87.

[4] One final point, on p. 134 Schwartz states that Nasser's regime's "brutal repression of the Muslim brotherhood…was both necessary and justified." Of course, he never notes that it was this brutality and torture in Nasser's prisons that truly led to the re-emergence of extremism in the Muslim world. Many of those extremists, it should be noted, found their way later to Afghanistan. For more on the development of this extremism under Nasser, see Abdul Rahmaan al-Luwaihiq, *Religious Extremism in the Lives of Contemporary Muslims* (Denver, CO: Al-Basheer Company for Publications and Translations, 2001), pp. 95-123.

Attar, Abdul-Azeez ibn Baaz and al-Huqail

For the sake of near "completeness," three other works should be mentioned here. The tone and subject matter covered in these works, especially the two larger ones, are much the same as this current work. Unfortunately, as is so often the case with authentic literature on Islam, these works are moderately to very difficult for the ordinary English-speaker to come by.

(1) *Muhammad ibn Abdel Wahhab* by Ahmad Abdol Ghafour Attar.[1] Translated by Rashed al-Barrawi. This work is a translation of a book originally published in 1972.[2] It seems to be a very faithful translation and the English only needs slight improvement. This book basically covers the life of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab with little or no discussion of some of the other topics covered herein. However, many of the battles that took place during ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's lifetime are covered in much more detail in that work than in this work. Unfortunately, in both the translation and the original work, the author had a tendency not to reference his material. Sometimes he would begin a passage by mentioning his source, in particular ibn Ghannaam or ibn Bishr. On a handful of occasion, Attar described incidents that this author could not verify from any earlier, first-hand sources. Reports of that nature were ignored while preparing this work.

(2) *Muhammad Bin Abdulwahhab: His Life and the Essence of His Call* by Sulaiman Bin Abdurrahman al-Huqail.[3] This work is based on al-Huqail's Master's Thesis at al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt. This work is a comprehensive work. It covers all the aspects of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's life, his teachings, the doubts raised against him and his influence in the world. One of its more notable and beneficial features is that it provides complete translations for some of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's letters.

(3) *Imam Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab: His Life & Mission* by Abdul Aziz Bin Baz[4] (being a translation of *al-Imaam Muhammad ibn Abdil-*

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[1] Attar, Ahmad Abdol Ghafour, *Muhammad ibn Abdel Wahhab* (Mecca Printing and Information, 1979).

[2] See Ahmad Abdul-Ghafoor Attaar, *Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhaab* (Makkah: n.p. 1977).

[3] Sulaiman Bin Abdurrahman al-Huqail, *Muhammad Bin Abdulwahhab: His Life and the Essence of His Call* (Riyadh: Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Dawah and Guidance, 2001).

[4] Abdul Aziz bin Baz, *Imam Muhammad Bin Abdul-Wahhab: His Life & Mission* (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997).

Wahhaab: Dawatuhu wa Seeratuhu by Abdul-Azeez ibn Baaz). This work is a very short work. Actually, it was a lecture delivered by ibn Baaz, bringing to his audience the main aspects of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's life and message.

Conclusion

In sum, one can say that much of the writing concerning ibn Abdul-Wahhaab from objective researchers of the West writing about Islam has improved. However, there is still room for improvement. Unfortunately, there are still those who insist on propagating the lies and falsehoods of earlier years. In this day and age of easy access to information and historical sources, there is really no excuse for this. In fact, one is reminded of al-Nadwi's statement who wrote in 1942,

> It is possible to excuse those people who accepted those false accusations in the past. That was because the books of the people of Najd were but little widespread. The scholars of Najd themselves were not very concerned about spreading their teachings outside of their lands. Therefore, it was very possible for a person to have false beliefs about them [the 'Wahhabis'] while having a sincere and pure intention. However, today, after the books of the Shaikh and the books of his students have become widespread, one cannot accept the excuse of ignorance and lack of knowledge.[1]

[1] Al-Nadwi, p. 23.

VII
Lessons for Today's World from the Life of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab

There are many lessons that one can take from the experience of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. In fact, it is very important for a Muslim to look back at pious souls who have passed on and set an example of knowledge, practice, patience, striving and sacrifice for the sake of Allah. Allah says to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

وَكُلًّا نَّقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنۢبَآءِ ٱلرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهِۦ فُؤَادَكَ ۚ وَجَآءَكَ فِى هَٰذِهِ ٱلْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And all that We relate to you of the news of the Messengers is in order that We may make strong and firm your heart thereby. And in this has come to you the truth, as well as an admonition and a reminder for the believers" (*Hood* 120).

However, learning about people like ibn Abdul-Wahhaab provides another advantage. It may be difficult for a person to picture himself among the likes of the prophets and their close Companions. Indeed, one may even convince himself that it is not possible to be like them. Then come individuals throughout the history of Islam who have many of the same noble characteristics but they are not prophets or companions of the prophets. They are, in a sense, "normal people." Furthermore, the society in which they grew up and their environment may be very much similar to that of the individual who is studying them.

With respect to the Muslims of today, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab fits this mold very well. There are a lot of similarities between the Muslim world he grew up in and the Muslim world today. The Muslim world was in a very difficult state at his time. The European powers were gaining more and more ground upon the caliphate and the Ottoman Turks. In other parts of the world, the Europeans were already moving

in and beginning to dominate, such as in India, North Africa and Indonesia. Even more important was the domestic situation. The Muslims seem to have lost the true spirit, meaning and practice of Islam. Many of them began to be overwhelmed by the scientific advancements of the West. The Shareeah had been a forgotten part of Islam in many areas.[1]

Today, much of the same is repeating itself. The methods and means may have changed. Politically, the Muslim countries as a whole are very weak. Man-made laws have replaced the Shareeah in most countries. Disunity and even hatred exists among various Muslim populations. Some Muslims, for example, are falling for the crass materialism of the West. This is not occurring through "trading companies" and colonial governments. It is occurring through the effects of international media and transnational corporations. But the end effect is much the same. Again, the true meaning of Islam is being lost on many Muslims. In many Muslim lands, religion is hardly being taught in the government run schools. The needs of secularist societies have been given precedence over the spiritual and religious needs of the Muslim people.

Finally, when people do return to the true Islam of the Quran and Sunnah, they are immediately "labeled," just like ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and his followers were immediately labeled. During his time, it was being a Kharijite, heretic or disbeliever. Today, one is called a fundamentalist or, much worse, a terrorist.

Yet ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, his supporters and followers were able to change their situation. At least for their own part of the world—and in many ways for almost every part of the world—they were able to bring back Islam. Surely in the momentous change that came about there are lessons to be had for Muslims of today who are looking at a bleak situation similar to that which he faced.

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab obviously was not a prophet nor was he corrected by divine revelation. He was prone to make mistakes as were his followers. Obviously, his statements and actions do not share

[1] Obviously, there are also a lot of dissimilarities between ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's time and the present time, especially with respect to political situations, creation of nation-states, international law and so on. The Muslim scholar and leader has to be able to discern the true similarities from the true dissimilarities and how each new situation is to handled.

the same kind of authority as the Quran or Sunnah. However, it is his efforts within the guidelines of the Quran and Sunnah that are of interest here. How he applied the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah to his own situation is the key. He did not come with a new religion or teachings. Instead, he went back to the Quran and Sunnah, understood them properly and had the vision to understand how they were supposed to be applied given his time and place. That was the key to the changes that came as a result of Allah's bounty and then his efforts. Those are the lessons that shall be explored in this chapter.

Finally, it is important to seek lessons from him and his teachings because it can be truly said that of all revivalist calls (and "movements") in the past couple of centuries, he was truly successful on virtually all fronts and the influence of his movement continues today.[1]

The Importance of Starting with Correcting One's Beliefs (*Aqeedah*) in Theory and Practice

Although this topic was touched upon while discussing ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's approach to *dawah* in Chapter 3, it is worthwhile to make a few more points. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) spent the first thirteen years of his mission, those years in Makkah before the migration to Madinah, teaching virtually solely the concept of *tauheed* and other aspects of *aqeedah*. Allah makes it very clear that every messenger was sent with a primary message—and that message was *tauheed* and faith. Allah specifically states while describing the words of many of the prophets to their people:

يَٰقَوۡمِ ٱعۡبُدُواْ ٱللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنۡ إِلَٰهٍ غَيۡرُهُۥٓ

"O my people! Worship Allah [alone]. You have no other god besides Him" (*al-Araaf* 59, 65, 73, 85 and *Hood* 50, 61, 84).

This should be a clear message to every Muslim generation, movement and group, that the correct belief has to be firmly implanted in the heart before any true fruits are to be expected. It is this proper and true *imaan* that allows the person to internalize the Quran and apply its

[1] It should be noted that in preparing this chapter, this author did benefit from Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 2, pp. 726-772--although the final discussion turned out very different.

injunctions sincerely and properly, everything from avoiding *shirk*, establishing the prayers, avoiding alcohol, to risking one’s life for the sake of Allah. These are part of the fruits of the beautiful tree of faith and monotheism, as opposed to the rotten results of idolatry and lack of faith, described by Allah in the Quran:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ ٱللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا
فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ ﴿٢٤﴾ تُؤْتِىٓ أُكُلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍۭ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا ۗ وَيَضْرِبُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْأَمْثَالَ
لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ ٱجْتُثَّتْ
مِن فَوْقِ ٱلْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِن قَرَارٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ يُثَبِّتُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِٱلْقَوْلِ ٱلثَّابِتِ
فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَفِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ ۖ وَيُضِلُّ ٱللَّهُ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ۚ وَيَفْعَلُ ٱللَّهُ مَا يَشَآءُ

“See you not how Allah sets forth a parable? A goodly word as a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the sky, giving its fruit at all times, by the Leave of its Lord and Allah sets forth parables for mankind in order that they may remember. And the parable of an evil word is that of an evil tree uprooted from the surface of earth having no stability. Allah will keep firm those who believe, with the word that stands firm in this world and in the Hereafter. And Allah will cause to go astray those who are wrongdoers, and Allah does what He wills” (*Ibraaheem* 24-27). It is narrated that ibn Abbaas said, “The goodly word is the testimony that there is none worthy of worship except Allah.”[1]

This important fact was also pointed out by the Companions. For example, Abdullah ibn Umar said, “We lived during a time in which one of us would receive faith first before receiving the Quran and when the *soorah*s were revealed we would learn what they permitted and what they prohibited and what they forbade and what they ordered and what should be the stance towards them. But I have seen men from whom one is given the Quran before *imaan* and he reads it from the opening of the Book to its closing and he does not know what it orders and what it forbids and what should be his stance towards it. He is like someone

[1] Quoted in ibn Katheer, *Tafseer* (Daar Taibah), vol. 4, p. 491.

who is just throwing out dates [that is, he does not get any benefit from his recital]."[1] Jundub ibn Abdullah al-Bajaly said, "We learned *imaan* [faith] and then we learned the Quran and it increased our *imaan*."

In reality, the correcting of *aqeedah* or one's belief system—not simply in a theoretical sense but in a real sense—is not only the starting point of any true Islamic call, it is also the goal of the call and teachings. When the understanding and the practice of *aqeedah* is correct, the individual is fulfilling his purpose for which he was created and he is pleasing Allah in the process. He becomes a true servant of Allah and all consequential blessings from that flow to him.

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab understood very well that it is via correcting the *aqeedah* that one can then correct the acts of worship, the behavior and manners, and all aspects of a person's life. To correct the "outer" without first correcting what is in a person's mind and heart will not have any true, long-lasting benefit. As noted earlier, this is the aspect that rang through all of his teaching, writing and communication. In particular, he stressed the very foundation of belief in God and what contradicts that foundation. There is no question that at the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, spreading the correct belief about the nature of the worship of God was the most important and also the most difficult task that he had to fulfill.

As alluded to above, some of the essential practices that flow from this proper *aqeedah* were seen in the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as well as in the closest followers of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. These aspects include the following:

(1) The obligation of applying the law of Allah in one's life and in one's society. Prayer, fasting, worshipping only Him, fulfilling trust, business laws, inheritance and numerous other deeds touching upon all spheres of life fall under this realm. These principles apply to all of society, from the ruler to the ruled, from the rich to the poor and so on.

(2) The importance of jihad or the willingness to sacrifice for the sake of Allah. The love of Allah and the true worship of Him alone requires that Allah be put above everything else in this life. The love to see the law of Allah implemented and Him alone worshipped

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[1] Recorded by al-Baihaqi and al-Haakim.

also requires the desire therefore to sacrifice in order to implement it. Allah has described the place of the love for Allah, His Messenger and striving for His sake in the verse:

قُلْ إِن كَانَ ءَابَآؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَآؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَٰنُكُمْ وَأَزْوَٰجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَٰلٌ ٱقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَٰرَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَٰكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَآ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُم مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَجِهَادٍ فِى سَبِيلِهِۦ فَتَرَبَّصُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِىَ ٱللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِۦ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلْفَٰسِقِينَ

“Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and striving hard and fighting for His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Decision (torment). And Allah guides not the people who are rebellious” (*al-Taubah* 24).

(3) The concept of having love and loyalty solely based on one’s firm belief in Allah, His Messenger and the teachings of Islam. There must be more than a love for the truth; there must also be a desire to disassociate and free oneself—a hate, in reality—from falsehood.[1]

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab once set out his methodology very clearly when he wrote,

> First comes knowledge—and that is knowledge of Allah, knowledge of His prophet and knowledge of the religion of Allah with its corresponding evidence. Second comes acting in accordance with [said knowledge]. Third comes calling to it. Fourth comes bearing patiently the harm that comes due to it. The proof for this [methodology] is Allah’s statement,

[1] As noted earlier, this hatred for falsehood and the upholders of falsehood does not mean that one does not deal justly with them, standing for truth and justice. One may not have a love for a people but will fight and stand for justice, even for those who are opposed to one’s beliefs. Indeed, the amazing aspect of this concept, as seen in the example of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), is that the opposition and hatred is accompanied with a true compassion and desire that the follower of falsehood embrace the truth. It also encompasses justice, where one is just even to one’s greatest enemy.

بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ وَٱلْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ لَفِى خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا۟ بِٱلْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا۟ بِٱلصَّبْرِ

"In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. (I swear) by time. Verily, mankind is in loss except those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth, and recommend one another to patience."[1]

Thus ibn Bishr wrote that when ibn Abdul-Wahhaab came to al-Diriyyah, he found the people very ignorant of the faith. They did not pray or pay the zakat and they rejected many of the aspects of Islam. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab changed their ways by first ordering them to learn the real meaning of "There is none worthy of worship except Allah." He taught them that this is a negation followed by an affirmation, that is, one denies the worship of all beings except Allah. He taught them that the concept of *ilaah* ("god") is the one that the heart extols with love, fear and hope. Then he taught them the three fundamentals. First comes knowing Allah, with the proofs from the Quran that point to his *ruboobiyyah* (Lordship) and *uloohiyyah* (Godhood). Then comes the knowledge of what Islam is, which is the submission to Allah by obeying His commands and avoiding what He forbade. Then he taught them about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who he was and what his life was like. He taught them the first thing that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) called them to. Ibn Bishr states that when the people truly started to learn the beauty of *tauheed*, it developed in their hearts a love for their teacher who brought them that truth and they were swept up in the new commitment to faith.[2]

Not to Despair No Matter How Great the Ignorance and Wrongdoing May Be

When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent to mankind, religiously speaking, the world was in a total

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[1] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, p. 185.
[2] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, pp. 37-39.

state of darkness.[1] Indeed, in one hadith, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stated,

أن رسولَ الله صلى اللهم علَيه وسلم قَالَ ذَات يومٍ في خطْبته ألا إِن ربي أمرنِـي أنْ أعلمكُم ما جهلْتم مما علمنِي يومي .. وإِن الله نظَر إِلَى أهلِ الْأرضِ فَمقَـتهم عربهم وعجمهم إِلا بقَايا من أهلِ الْكتابِ وقَالَ إنما بعثْتك لأبتليك وأبتلي بِك..

“One day, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said during his sermon, ‘Behold, my Lord commanded me that I should teach you that which you do not know and which He has taught me today… Verily, Allah looked towards the people of the earth and He showed hatred for the Arabs and the non-Arabs, with the exception of some remnants of the People of the Book. And He said, “I have sent you in order to try you and to try [them] through you”…’” (Recorded by Muslim.) Yet within a very short span of time, a portion of humanity rose from the abyss to lead mankind into a new era, in which godliness would once again be the essential virtue. Although the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is no longer alive and his leadership in physical form in this world is no longer possible, the guidance that he received will always be preserved to lead mankind whenever they take it upon themselves to turn to it.

As described in Chapter 3, by the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, Islam, and hence all of humanity, had once again reached a very sad state. Through his travels, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was well aware that the darkness that had overcome Najd was not restricted to Najd alone but was apparent throughout Muslim lands. Yet as great as that darkness was, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab knew that if the people would correct their beliefs and change their ways, their lives could be completely transformed. Thus it was that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab told Muhammad ibn Saud at the time of their historic pact, “Indeed, I give you glad tidings of honor and being established in the land. Whoever

[1] For the plight of the world at the time of the coming of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the change Allah brought about via the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), see Jamaal al-Din Zarabozo, *How to Approach and Understand the Quran* (Boulder, CO: Al-Basheer Company for Publications and Translations, 1999), pp. 36-47.

sticks to these words, ‘There is no true god except Allah,’ acts by them and supports them will rule the land and the people.”[1]

The example that he and his followers gave can once again give hope to mankind today. As long as that guidance is there—the Quran and Sunnah as propagated by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), which was followed and implemented by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab—there can always be hope that mankind may wake up and return to those great teachings. That revelation has the ability to stir in the hearts of mankind and revive the deadened souls. In fact, there is one verse in the Quran, not to speak of the entire Quran, that has changed the hearts of many a wrongdoer and may continue to have that effect,

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَن تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ ٱلْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُواْ كَٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ مِن قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ ۖ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَٰسِقُونَ

“Has not the time come for the hearts of those who believe to be affected by Allah's Reminder and that which has been revealed of the truth, lest they become as those who received the Scripture before, and the term was prolonged for them and so their hearts were hardened? And many of them were disobedient” (*al-Hadeed* 16).

If Muslims, with religious scholars as their leaders, return to that revelation, there is hope for the Muslim Nation and there is hope for all of mankind. But as Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab told Muhammad ibn Saud, there are some conditions for this change and eventual support and victory from Allah. Simply by calling oneself Muslim while not obeying Allah and adhering to His religion will not change the state of a people. Instead, they must turn to Allah, purify their beliefs and submit to Him completely. Allah’s promise is to those described in the verse,

[1] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 35.

وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ مِنكُمۡ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ لَيَسۡتَخۡلِفَنَّهُمۡ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ
كَمَا ٱسۡتَخۡلَفَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبۡلِهِمۡ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمۡ دِينَهُمُ ٱلَّذِي ٱرۡتَضَىٰ
لَهُمۡ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّنۢ بَعۡدِ خَوۡفِهِمۡ أَمۡنٗاۚ يَعۡبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشۡرِكُونَ بِي شَيۡـٔٗاۚ وَمَن
كَفَرَ بَعۡدَ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلۡفَٰسِقُونَ

“Allah has promised those among you who believe, and do righteous good deeds, that He will certainly grant them succession in the earth, as He granted it to those before them, and that He will grant them the authority to practise their religion, that which He has chosen for them. And He will surely give them in exchange a safe security after their fear (provided) they (believers) worship Me and do not associate anything (in worship) with Me. But whoever disbelieved after this, they are the disobedient” (*al-Noor* 55).

The point is that this change can happen and has happened more than once in the history of mankind. It can happen within one generation—indeed, within the lifetime of one true scholar who is sincere to Allah, learns his faith correctly and is willing to sacrifice for that goal. No matter how terrible a state the Muslims may be in, there should always be hope; a true believer should never be driven to despair. A Muslim should always work for the desired change. Allah willing, the change will come about in this world, but in any case the person’s efforts will never go unappreciated by Allah.

The Importance of a Proper “Educational and Spiritual Upbringing”

In a famous hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), he taught the very young but precocious teenager ibn Abbaas lessons that would remain with him for his lifetime. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) taught him words which many would argue are “heavy” for a youngster but if he is able to internalize them while young, it will be a great source of guidance. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to young ibn Abbaas,

يا غُلاَم إِني أُعلمك كَلمات احفَظ الله يحفَظْك احفَظ الله تجِـده تجاهـك إِذَا سأَلْت فَاسأَلِ الله وإِذَا استعنت فَاستعن بِالله واعلَم أَن الْأُمةَ لَو اجتمعت علَـى أَنْ ينفَعوك بِشيءٍ لَم ينفَعوك إِلا بِشيءٍ قَد كَتبه الله لَك وإِن اجتمعوا علَى أَنْ يضروك بِشيءٍ لَم يضروك إِلا بِشيءٍ قَد كَتبه الله علَيك رفعت الْأَقْلَام وجفت الصحف

"O young man, I shall teach you some words [of advice]. Be mindful of Allah and Allah will protect you. Be mindful of Allah, and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, ask of Allah. If you seek help, seek help in Allah. Know that if the nation were to gather together to benefit you with something, they would not benefit you with anything except that which Allah has already recorded for you. If they gather to harm you by something, they would not be able to harm you by anything except what Allah has already recorded against you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried."[1]

If it is hoped that someone is going to come along to revive this Muslim nation, it should be realized that many revivers such as ibn Taimiyyah and ibn Abdul-Wahhaab were not produced in a vacuum. Instead, they were brought up on the proper knowledge of this religion via parents and relatives who themselves were dedicated to learning this faith and passed that dedication along to their later generations. Thus the individual is able to grow and develop with a clear insight into the foundations of the faith and what is needed to revive the faith among the Muslim masses. This also protects the individual from straying and seeing as solutions aspects that are in reality diseases in themselves. For example, in the case of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, he recognized the major diseases and problems that the Muslim Nation had fallen into. Indeed, the Muslim Nation had become weak not simply due to the industrial revolution of the West but because the Nation had left the path of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Nation left the path of worshipping Allah alone and not associating any partners with Him. This was the root cause of the evil that inflicted the Muslim world. Based on his proper knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah, Ibn

[1] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi. It is a *sahih* hadith. For a discussion of the authenticity of this hadith, see Zarabozo, *Commentary*, vol. 2, pp. 731-734.

Abdul-Wahhaab recognized this sad fact and set about to reform the Nation.

In addition to the "educational background," it is important to be brought up in the correct spiritual framework. This is where one dedicates himself to prayers, fasts, remembrance of Allah and so forth, all in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This will develop the proper ties with Allah and the proper understanding of the reality of this creation. In turn, this develops the trust in Allah, the patience, the courage and the fortitude that is needed whenever an individual is attempting to bring about change and struggle against popular but false beliefs and practices. In the example of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab one can once again see the importance of this type of upbringing. He never lost his faith in Allah and his faith that Allah would support the members of this faith when they adhered properly to it. Thus, when he was forced or had to leave Basra, Huraimila and al-Uyainah, he did not flinch. He recognized that such is part of the plan of Allah and, in return, the servant must have the proper reliance in Allah and patience to be blessed by Allah with complete victory.

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's life demonstrates that the caller to the true religion of Allah—who is fulfilling a role like all the previous prophets—is bound to face great trials. These trials include both psychological and physical threats to his well-being. Without the proper spiritual and educational preparation, a person may not realize that this is all part of the way of Allah and he may not realize what is supposed to be his response. For example, instead of patience and remaining steadfast within the limits of the Shareeah, he may seek some shortcut solution that violates the Shareeah and brings about greater harm than good. From early on, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was faced with such trials—from false claims being made against him, scholars refuting his views all the way to threats on his life. However, that never deterred him nor did it ever make him question his purpose and goal. He took all of these in stride knowing that they were ways to better himself, purify his own intention and strengthen the sincerity of the followers as well.

This is an important point that cannot be overemphasized today. Unfortunately, many Muslim parents are so concerned with the future economic well-being of their child (and perhaps also their own

status), that they put their efforts, time and money into secular studies while neglecting their children's spiritual upbringing and religious knowledge. If a young person in today's world does not have the proper spiritual strength and understanding of the religion, it will be easy for him to be swayed when he comes face-to-face with the desires and temptations of this world. Similarly, even if he may have some love for the truth, he may not have the moral fortitude to adhere to the truth whenever his faith or way of life is threatened in even the slightest fashion. This phenomenon of a stress on secular education and future money-making cannot bode well for a community whose very religious tenets are being challenged day in and day out. Muslim parents and Muslim communities must wake up and learn a lesson from the example set by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in teaching youngsters and the example of many of the reformers of the past: the proper spiritual upbringing of one's youth greatly aids in adhering to the faith no matter how great the trial.

Finally, one should keep in mind the true purpose behind education or any of the bounties that he has been blessed with by Allah. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab once wrote, "If a people have intelligence and acumen and they have piety and good behavior, that does not necessarily imply true happiness unless it is accompanied by belief in Allah, the One. The strength of intelligence is like the strength of the body. The people of thought and knowledge are like kings and rulers. None of any of that is beneficial unless it is accompanied by worshipping Allah alone, without any partner."[1]

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 223.

The Importance of "Education" For All

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ علَى كُلِّ مسلمٍ

"Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim."[1] The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself was sent to a people of whom the majority were illiterate. Yet by the time of his death, a good portion of society knew how to read and write. Actually, though, his people were steeped in ignorance of all kinds, especially related to their religious practices. Thus, the most important of the Prophet's teachings was not the issue of literacy but the issue of beliefs. And this important knowledge, he imparted to all, from the nobles to the humblest slave-girl. Over time in the Muslim world, this was something that was lost and, in some areas, religious knowledge became the privilege of only certain classes.[2]

Ibn Bishr, while speaking of the accomplishments of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote,

> He taught *tauheed* to the young and the old while before it was just known to the elite. He gathered the people together in the prayers and lectures. He would ask about the foundations of Islam, the prerequisites of the prayers... He would teach these things to the young and old, to the literate and illiterate, while before only the elite would know them. All of the peoples of the lands benefited from him because they would ask about what he was ordering and what he was prohibiting.[3]

In contemporary times, one hears a great deal of discussion of the importance of literacy for all. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab understood and implemented something much more important than that. He stressed the education of all Muslims concerning the fundamentals of the faith—this is in fact the most important type of education that first

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[1] Recorded by a number of authorities, including ibn Maajah. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 727.

[2] Cf., al-Qataan and al-Zain, p. 17. These two authors argue that not only were the scholars a class in and of themselves, but they were also a very conservative class, opposing any kind of "reform" or "change."

[3] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 163.

needs to be spread (in many cases, it can be spread alongside literacy as people learn to read the Quran and hadith). He wrote, "The conclusion is that the issues of *tauheed* are not from those matters which are the concern of the *mutawwa*s alone. Instead, researching these issues and learning them are a necessary obligation upon the scholar, the ignorant, the male, the female…"[1]

The basics of the faith cannot be restricted just to certain classes. If that is the case, the practice of the faith will not permeate all the different classes and echelons of society. The complete society could not become truly Islamic. With ignorance, individuals can never develop a true attachment and love for this faith. However, if everyone—or as many as possible—are given the proper education, then everyone will be able to grow in this faith, have the correct belief about Allah, appreciate and love the faith, practice it in their lives and be correspondingly blessed by Allah due to their knowledge, practice and devotion to the faith.

This was clearly the type of society that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab envisioned and worked to bring about. He made it obligatory that the fundamentals of the faith be taught in the mosque—and he even prepared short epistles specifically for teaching the uninitiated. Hence, his work, *The Three Fundamentals*, was studied in the mosques and recited from memory after the Fajr Prayers. This work comprises knowledge that is based not on the statements of later scholars or "saints" but directly on the Quran and Sunnah—thus linking the individual and the revelation from Allah.

In addition, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab sent teachers to the smaller villages and even to Bedouin tribes.[2] These teachers taught the people their faith: who is their Lord, who is their Prophet and what is their religion. They taught the five pillars of Islam and the six basic articles of faith. They taught the rights of Allah and the rights of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Ibn Baaz notes, "Thus,

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 189.

[2] This effort continued long after ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's time, although in some of the more distant lands it may not have been completely effective. Burckhardt (vol. 1, p. 249) noted, "Of reading and writing, all Bedouins throughout Arabia are equally ignorant. The Wahaby chiefs have taken pains to instruct them; they have sent Imams among the different tribes to teach the children, but their efforts have had little effect and the Bedouins remain, as might be expected, a most illiterate people."

the commoners among the Muslims and Bedouins began to know the foundations and fundamentals of the faith concerning which many people today who hold degrees of higher learning are themselves ignorant."[1] With this correct knowledge came a great attachment and devotion to the Quran and Sunnah.[2] He instructed his teachers to teach "the right of Allah upon His servants, the rights of the created, such as the right of a Muslim upon another Muslim, the rights of kinship and the rights of parents, and most importantly, the right of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)."[3]

These efforts were summarized by Siddiqi when he wrote,

> In order to set his movement on the right lines and to perpetuate the influence of his teaching on future generations, the Shaikh made an elaborate programme of fostering education amongst the masses. As a result of his efforts every oasis was given its own *maktab*, and teachers who could both teach and preach were sent to the Bedouin tribes. The disciples of the Shaikh pursued learning with great ardour. Ibn Bishr says that so many were the students attracted to his classes that if somebody were to attempt to give their number nobody would believe him. All his sons, Husain, Abd Allah, Ali, and Ibrahim, had their own *maktabs* in their houses where students from distant places came to master Islamic learning.[4]

He was not simply concerned with the outward practices of the faith. He also taught the people about *zuhd* (proper abstinence from desiring the goods of this world), purification of the soul, the importance of increasing one's acts of worship, continual remembrance of Allah, imploring Allah for guidance, continual prayers to Him and the ever important two conditions of purity and following the revelation in every righteous act.[5] He also stressed that learning without its subsequent application meant nothing. Thus, he

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[1] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 2, p. 729.

[2] Ibn Baaz (vol. 2, p. 729) notes that another result of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's approach is that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's death did not weaken the faith of the people at all. This is because ibn Abdul-Wahhaab made them attached to the Quran and the grand example, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and not to himself and his personal views. Thus the call continued with great strength even after his death.

[3] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 2, p. 747.

[4] Siddiqi, vol. 2, pp. 1448-1449.

[5] Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 2, p. 747.

wrote, "Knowledge is not to be called knowledge unless it bears fruit [that is, deeds]. If it does not bear any fruit, it is ignorance. Thus, Allah says, 'Those who truly fear Allah among His servants are the knowledgeable' [*Faatir* 28]."[1] As was noted above, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's approach was: attaining belief and knowledge, implementing it, spreading it to others and then remaining patient on that path. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab quoted *soorah al-Asr* to support this approach.[2]

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was just as much concerned about the proper and essential education of women as he was for men. In any kind of society, women are bound to play an important role. However, they are of utmost importance in an Islamic society in which family and moral values are stressed. It does not benefit the society when the greatest caretaker of the future generation is not knowledgeable of the religion and morals of the society. Thus, in numerous letters, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stressed that the religion must be taught to both men and women. In a letter quoted above, he stated, "The conclusion is that the issues of *tauheed* are not from those matters which are the concern of the *mutawwa*s alone. Instead, researching these issues and learning them are a necessary obligation upon the scholar, the ignorant, the male, the female…"[3] On another occasion, he wrote that the teachings of the faith "must be spread among the people, the women and the men."[4] When speaking about loving for the sake of Allah, hating for the sake of Allah, having loyalty for the sake of Allah and disassociating for the sake of Allah, he said that the men must learn this and "it is obligatory upon the men to teach their wives and the members of their household this aspect."[5]

This spread of education wherein the masses can understand the teachings and be able to defend it themselves must have

[1] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 162.
[2] Cf., Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 1, p. 185.
[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 189.
[4] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 127 and p. 323.
[5] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 127. Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also worked to remove some of the wrong that was being done to the women in his society. In addition to encouraging their education, he also fought against the common practice of leaving endowments that practically prevented women from receiving their rightful inheritance.

contributed to the success of the reform call itself. Idris noted this aspect when he wrote,

> Leaders of social reform movements usually come with ideas with which people are not familiar, and they are therefore prone to encounter challenge, criticism and opposition. While the leader and the elite around him might be able to defend their new thinking in the face of this opposition, the rank and file of the movement cannot do so. But the movement consists mainly of these common people, and the opposition might adopt a strategy of defying and embarrassing them by asking them questions they cannot answer, in the hope of weakening their hold on those new beliefs, and thus weakening the movement. This happened to 'Abd al-Wahhab's followers, and he realized the importance of giving these people confidence in themselves and arming them with simple arguments that they could understand and use effectively, even against people who were much more learned than they were. He encouraged them not to be intimidated by people who were known to be more learned than they because a learned person is weak as long as he is on the side of falsehood, and a lay person is strong so long as he adheres to the truth. To this end he divided arguments for them into two categories: general arguments which even a lay person could use to answer any objection, and specific answers to the most commonly raised questions.[1]

Following the "Cause and Effect" in This World While Putting One's Complete Trust in Allah

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was the example *par excellence* of understanding how one must adhere to the apparent and material causes of this world while at the same time putting all of one's reliance and trust in Allah alone. For example, in his battles against the disbelievers, he took all the necessary steps that he could take and struggled, realizing that all the results lay with Allah's decree. When deciding a matter, as another example, he would consult with his Companions and then once they used all the resources they could to come to the proper conclusion, they would put their trust and reliance in Allah to bring about the best result. This was in obedience to Allah's command,

[1] Idris, p. 5.

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِى ٱلْأَمْرِ ۖ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

"Consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, certainly, Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)" (*ali-Imraan* 159).

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's life is an excellent example of combining these aspects that some seem to have difficulty combining or conceiving.[1] He combined following the causes and being cautious and careful with a strong trust in Allah and relying upon Allah alone. He considered putting one's trust and reliance in Allah as one of the necessities of faith.[2] However, ignoring the "apparent causes" in this physical world is in contradiction to the example set by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) while complete reliance upon them—thinking that they alone can bring about some benefit, forgetting that only if Allah wills can they result in any benefit—can be a type of *shirk*. Thus, as ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stated, he sought to "combine the trust in Allah with the following of causes, in contradiction to the extremists among the jurists [who rely merely on causes] and the extremists among the Sufis [who rely merely on a false concept of trust in Allah]."[3]

From the outset, his goal was quite clear: the reformation of Muslim society. In order to achieve that goal, he first acquired the necessary knowledge. Secondly, he sought the necessary backing that would allow such a goal to be implemented, similar to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) emigrating to Madinah. Under the circumstances he lived in, without the backing of a respected authority, his call would have been doomed to failure. Since his call was such an affront to the ignorant customs of his people, it is not difficult to conceive of him being assassinated, for example, early

[1] For some of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's comments on the importance and concept of putting one's trust in Allah, see Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, pp. 163 and 183.

[2] See Nusair, p. 172.

[3] Quoted in Nusair, p. 172. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab refers to the story of Moses and Khidhr in *soorah al-Kahf*. He says that in this story is a refutation of those who do not believe in following causes, since Allah had the ability to save the ship, confirm the parents of the boy and bring out the treasure of the orphan without resorting to those acts. See Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 5, section on *tafseer*, p. 259.

on. Indeed, when ibn Abdul-Wahhaab went to destroy the tomb of Zaid ibn al-Khattaab, he told Uthmaan, the ruler, "I fear that the people of al-Jubailah will attack me. I am not able to destroy it without your presence."[1] In addition, Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's move from Huraimila to al-Uyainah and his subsequent move to al-Diriyyah (where he already had a following and who were the opponents of the Tribe of Khalid) were further examples of following the "outward causes" that may lead to success and not simply wishing and hoping that Allah will change the situation of the people.

By now it is obvious that many of the lessons discussed in this chapter tie into one another and tend to go back to the original issue: that of completely correcting one's belief system and having the proper faith. In other words, some of the most important "apparent causes," although not necessarily physical causes in the eyes of the materialists, are: correcting one's belief, leaving all *jaahiliyyah* and *shirk* behind as well as any desire for it, correcting one's morals and behavior. This is perhaps the greatest step that one needs to take. In fact, in general, one should never take part in a physical struggle, such as military jihad (or what some Muslims may foolishly resort to—terrorism) and expect to be victorious until one has tended to these forms of important causes. This was very clear in the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as well as in the life of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

The Necessity of Having Support for the Call

Perhaps closely related to the previous point is another feature that one finds exhibited in the method of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab: the importance of having political support for the teachings and call. With the backing of the "powers that be," the call can be one of both knowledge and action, theoretical and practical. The importance of political support and "strength" is highlighted in the Quran.

For example, when speaking to his transgressing people, Lot alluded to the fact that he had no power or strength to keep them from fulfilling their desires. Thus, Allah quotes him as saying,

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[1] Ibn Bishr, vol. 1, p. 32.

لَوْ أَنَّ لِى بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ ءَاوِىٓ إِلَىٰ رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ

"Would that I had strength (men) to overpower you, or that I could betake myself to some powerful support (to resist you)" (*Hood* 80).

Allah also says in the Quran,

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَأَنزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ ٱلنَّاسُ بِٱلْقِسْطِ ۖ وَأَنزَلْنَا ٱلْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنَٰفِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ ٱللَّهُ مَن يَنصُرُهُۥ وَرُسُلَهُۥ بِٱلْغَيْبِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَوِىٌّ عَزِيزٌ

"Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice) that mankind may keep up justice. And We brought forth iron wherein is mighty power (in matters of war), as well as many benefits for mankind, that Allah may test who it is that will help Him (His religion), and His Messengers in the unseen. Verily, Allah is All-Strong, All-Mighty" (*al-Hadeed* 25). While discussing this verse, Abdul Aziz bin Baz wrote,

> In the above verse, Allah points out that He sent the Messengers with clear proofs. These were arguments by which they clarified the truth and pushed back the falsehood. He also revealed to the Messengers the Book that contained guidance as well as clear explanation. He also revealed the Balance. It is justice which protects the oppressed from the oppressor, maintains the truth and spreads the guidance; it is in the light of justice that people treat one another with truth and fairness. Allah also brought forth iron of mighty power. That is, it is force, deterrence and suppression against those who oppose the truth. So the use of iron is for those in whom proofs and explanation do not work. Hence it is adherent to the truth and suppressor of the falsehood. Any intelligent man with a common sense will benefit from clear proofs and accept the truth with its evidence. But the oppressor or the wrongdoer who follows his lusts cannot be deterred except with a sword.[1]

Touching upon this same verse, al-Nadwi also noted, "It should not be hidden to the wise, seeing person that material power has an important role in spreading the message and thoughts, in addition to spiritual

[1] Abdulaziz bin Baz, pp. 37-38 (translated by Atiyyeh).

strength, proofs and evidence. If any call or movement does not have a strength that can protect and defend it, it will soon be devoured by the forces of evil and tyrants, until its very roots are torn out."[1]

Allah also says,

وَقُل رَّبِّ أَدۡخِلۡنِى مُدۡخَلَ صِدۡقٍ وَأَخۡرِجۡنِى مُخۡرَجَ صِدۡقٍ وَٱجۡعَل لِّى مِن لَّدُنكَ سُلۡطَـٰنًا نَّصِيرًا

"And say (O Muhammad): My Lord! Let my entry (to the city of Al-Madinah) be good, and likewise my exit (from the city of Makkah) be good. And grant me from You an authority to help me (or a firm sign or a proof)" (*al-Israa* 80). Qataadah said, "The Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had no ability to fulfill this mission except with authority (*sultaan*). So he asked for an authority that would be assistance for the Book of Allah, the limits of Allah, the obligations of Allah and to establish the religion of Allah. Authority is a mercy of Allah that He puts in front of His servants. If it were not for that, they would conquer one another and the strong would devour the weak."[2]

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also sought support before moving to Madinah, as is clear in the following hadith:

عن جابِرٍ قَالَ مكَثَ رسولُ الله صلى اللهم عليه وسلم بِمكةَ عشر سنِ يتبع الناس في منازِلهم بعكَاظ ومجنةَ وفي الْمواسمِ بِمنى يقُولُ من يؤوِينِي من ينصرنِي حتى أُبلغَ رِسالَةَ ربي ولَه الْجنةُ

Jaabir stated, "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) spent ten years in Makkah following the people to their places at the gatherings in Ukaadh and Majanah and during the gathering at Mina. He would say, 'Who will assist me? Who will support me such that I can convey the message of my Lord and for him will be Paradise?'"[3]

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[1] Al-Nadwi, p. 44.
[2] See ibn Katheer, vol. 5, p. 111.
[3] Recorded by Ahmad, al-Haakim and others. According to al-Arnaoot, et al., the chain is *sahih* according to Muslim's criteria. See Shuaib al-Arnaoot, et al.,

It is especially during times like those of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and like those of today, wherein the heresies, incorrect beliefs and evil practices have become so entrenched that without some strength in society, one's reform and purification movement can be crushed easily. Al-Atram noted that in such an environment as ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's, it was not possible to remove the wrongs simply with the speech of the scholars. Instead, it needed someone who would threaten them and have the authority behind him to fulfil his threats. Then al-Atram quoted the famous expression: Allah removes via the government or rule what He does not remove via the Quran.[1]

One finds that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab understood very well the importance of this concept. The religion of Islam is meant to be established as the guide for all aspects of society. A complete reformation of society means a reformation of personal behavior as well as state and public behavior. Without the support of at least some of the "powers that be," it would be expected that its enemies would crush any such call or movement. Even if someone may believe in something, he may not have the ability to implement what he believes—that is, he may find it necessary not to speak or implement everything that he knows is true. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab touched on this point while speaking about scholars during his own lifetime. In one letter he wrote, "As for the matter that people rebuke me, hate me and oppose me for, if one were to ask any scholar from al-Shaam, Yemen or elsewhere about it, they would say, 'It is the truth. It is the religion of Allah and His Messenger. However, I do not have the ability to show it openly in my place because the government does not approve of it. However, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab is able to show it openly because the ruler in his land does not object to it.'"[2]

Thus, when ibn Abdul-Wahhaab first moved to al-Uyainah, he presented his beliefs to Uthmaan and called him to believe in the proper *tauheed* and to support the religion of Allah. Uthmaan accepted what ibn Abdul-Wahhaab taught and assisted him in preaching and spreading the truth. Hence, the call got a firm footing, attracted many followers and was able to actually put its teachings into practice. It

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footnotes to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risaalah, 1998), vol. 23, pp. 346-349.

[1] Al-Atram, vol. 1, p. 265.

[2] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 32.

was able to remove the false objects of worship and even institute the punishment for adultery. The same was true when ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was forced to leave al-Uyainah and go to al-Diriyyah. Again, in al-Diriyyah, the *Ameer* Muhammad ibn Saud accepted ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's message and supported it to the fullest.

It is perhaps for this reason that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's teachings and following actually had a greater impact than even his intellectual mentor ibn Taimiyyah and other great reformers. Speaking in comparison to other reformers, Attar noted that their impact was "a limited intellectual one that did not go beyond a small number of thinkers who were impressed by them and influenced by their reformist ideas."[1] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, on the other hand, was able to create an Islamic state that continued to exist after his death.

One should also take note of how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent letters to the different rulers and people in authority. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab did exactly the same thing. It goes without saying that the people of influence can have the greatest affect. If these people can be won over to the cause, the call itself can be greatly assisted—without, of course, sacrificing the right of anyone to believe and be accepted as a full member of the community, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) refused to sacrifice his poorer Companions to meet the desires of the rich nonbelievers. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) even made the following prayer to Allah prior to the very influential, strong and charismatic Umar becoming Muslim,

اللهم أعز الإسلام بِأحب هذَين الرجلَين إليك بِأبِي جهلٍ أو بِعمر بن الْخطابِ

"O Allah, give strength to Islam by the more beloved to you of these two, Abu Jahl or Umar ibn al-Khattaab."[2] This is an important point that the scholars and religious organizations of today should keep in mind. Everyone is welcomed to Islam and it is hoped that everyone, rich or poor, powerful or weak, becomes a Muslim. However, at least

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[1] Attar, p. 92.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi, ibn Hibbaan and others. According to al-Albaani, it is *saheeh*. According to al-Adawi, it is *sahih* based on its supporting evidence. Cf., al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, vol. 3, p. 204; Mustafa al-Adawi, *al-Saheeh al-Musnad min Fadhaail al-Sahaabah* (Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia: Daar ibn Affaan, 1995), pp. 81-82.

in the West, much *dawah* effort is exerted towards the “commoners” and even prisoners but not as much effort seems to be exerted in converting some of the leaders of the society. Even the publications introducing people to Islam are written in such a manner that they may not have much effect on those who are used to a different level of scholarship. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) set the first example and ibn Abdul-Wahhaab followed that example and they both demonstrated that it is of great importance to try to bring influential and powerful people to Islam, people who in and of themselves can be a benefit to Islam after embracing Islam.

Having Full Certainty with Respect to the Absolute Importance of Following the Truth

Allah says in the Quran,

إِنَّمَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا۟ وَجَٰهَدُوا۟ بِأَمْوَٰلِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلصَّٰدِقُونَ

“Only those are the believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and afterward doubt not but strive with their wealth and their lives for the Cause of Allah. Those! They are the truthful” (*al-Hujuraat* 15). Allah also says,

إِنَّمَا يَسْتَـْٔذِنُكَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْـَٔاخِرِ وَٱرْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِى رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ

“It is only those who believe not in Allah and the Last Day and whose hearts are in doubt that ask your leave (to be exempted from jihad). So in their doubts they waver” (*al-Taubah* 45). Islam demands certainty on the part of its adherents. It is the lack of this certainty that makes people waver in their commitment in the face of temptations or trials and in their willingness to sacrifice for the sake of Allah.

This certainty comes about through many means, the most important of them being a sound understanding of the beliefs of Islam. When the person has that correct knowledge and sound belief, he realizes, regardless of the superficial appearance of what is occurring

in this world, that true success and happiness can only lie with those people who have the correct faith in their hearts. This true happiness, tranquility and success is both of this life and the Hereafter. Allah says,

ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَتَطۡمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُم بِذِكۡرِ ٱللَّهِۗ أَلَا بِذِكۡرِ ٱللَّهِ تَطۡمَئِنُّ ٱلۡقُلُوبُ

"Those who believe, and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah, verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest" (*al-Rad* 28). The one who accepts and follows the revelation from his Lord and Creator should never grieve or be miserable. Allah says,

فَإِمَّا يَأۡتِيَنَّكُم مِّنِّي هُدٗى فَمَنِ ٱتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشۡقَىٰ ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَمَنۡ أَعۡرَضَ عَن ذِكۡرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُۥ مَعِيشَةٗ ضَنكٗا وَنَحۡشُرُهُۥ يَوۡمَ ٱلۡقِيَٰمَةِ أَعۡمَىٰ ﴿١٢٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرۡتَنِيٓ أَعۡمَىٰ وَقَدۡ كُنتُ بَصِيرٗا ﴿١٢٥﴾ قَالَ كَذَٰلِكَ أَتَتۡكَ ءَايَٰتُنَا فَنَسِيتَهَاۖ وَكَذَٰلِكَ ٱلۡيَوۡمَ تُنسَىٰ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجۡزِي مَنۡ أَسۡرَفَ وَلَمۡ يُؤۡمِنۢ بِـَٔايَٰتِ رَبِّهِۦۚ وَلَعَذَابُ ٱلۡأٓخِرَةِ أَشَدُّ وَأَبۡقَىٰٓ

"Then if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My Guidance shall neither go astray, nor fall into distress and misery. But whosoever turns away from My Reminder, verily, for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection. He will say, 'O my Lord! Why have you raised me up blind, while I had sight (before).' (Allah) will say, 'Like this, Our signs came unto you, but you disregarded them and so this Day, you will be neglected (in the Hell- fire, away from Allah's Mercy)'" (*Taha* 123-127). This does not mean that trials, hardships and difficulties from a material or worldly sense will not accompany the believer. Definitely they will accompany him, at least for some time. But his faith will allow him to understand them properly and not to be grieved by them.

Thus, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote, "Do not think that straitened circumstances come with the religion of Islam. No, by Allah! In fact, [the true] straitened circumstances, want, harsh times and poor fortune accompany falsehood and turning away from the

religion of Islam."[1] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab demonstrated his certainty in this belief when he discussed his beliefs and conditions with both Uthmaan ibn Muammar and Muhammad ibn Saud. He told them that if they are truly willing to fight and sacrifice for this creed, then success shall certainly be theirs.

A related point is not to be fooled by who receives the material goods of this world. The material goods of this world are not, in themselves, the keys to happiness or to a life filled with contentment in this physical world. And, in the Hereafter, of a surety, they are not the keys to true happiness and felicity. Thus, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

من كانت الآخرةُ همه جعلَ الله غناه في قَلْبِه وجمع لَه شملَه وأتته الدنيا وهي راغمةٌ ومن كانت الدنيا همه جعلَ الله فَقْره بين عينيه وفَرق علَيه شملَه ولَم يأته من الدنيا إلا ما قُدر لَه

"If a person's main concern is the Hereafter, Allah puts his richness in his heart, makes his affairs together for him and gives to him the world while it is not desirable to him. And if a person's main concern is this world, Allah will put his poverty in front of his eyes, make his affairs disunited and will not give him of this world save what has been decreed for him."[2] The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said,

لَيس الْغنى عن كَثْرة الْعرضِ ولَكن الْغنى غنى النفْسِ

"True richness is not via much property and belongings but true richness is in self-contentment." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) Finally, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said,

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 292.

[2] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi and ibn Maajah. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 1110-1111.

إِذَا رأيت الله يعطي الْعبد من الدنيا علَى معاصيه ما يحب فَإِنما هو استدراج ثُم تلَا رسولُ الله صلى اللهم علَيه وسلم (فَلَما نسوا ما ذُكروا بِه فَتحنا علَيهم أَبـواب كُل شيءٍ حتى إِذَا فَرِحوا بِما أُوتوا أَخذْناهم بغتةً فَإِذَا هم مبلسونَ)

"If you see Allah giving a human the things that he loves of this worldly life while he is sinning, [know] that is only [him being taken] step by step [to his destruction]." Then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) recited the verse,

فَلَمَّا نَسُواْ مَا ذُكِّرُواْ بِهِۦ فَتَحۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ أَبۡوَٰبَ كُلِّ شَيۡءٍ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا فَرِحُواْ بِمَآ أُوتُوٓاْ أَخَذۡنَٰهُم بَغۡتَةً فَإِذَا هُم مُّبۡلِسُونَ

"So, when they forgot (the warning) with which they had been reminded, We opened to them the gates of every (pleasant) thing, until in the midst of their enjoyment in that which they were given, all of a sudden, We took them to punishment, and lo! They were plunged into destruction with deep regrets and sorrows" (*al-Anaam* 44).[1]

The Importance of Turning to Allah

On many occasions, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stressed turning to Allah and sincerely pleading for guidance and support. This indeed is the key to finding the truth in the face of all of the opinions and desires that one encounters in one's life. In his letter to Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul-Lateef, he wrote, "You must turn humbly to Allah and fall down to the ground in front of Him, especially during the times of response [from Allah], such as the last of the night, after the prayers and after the call to prayer. [You should also] make the supplications passed down [from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)], in particular the one recorded in the *Sahih* that he would say, 'O Allah, Lord of Gabriel, Michael and Israafeel, Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, Knower of the Unseen and Seen, You judge between Your servants on the matters in which they differ, guide me by Your will to the truth of that which they differ,

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[1] Recorded by Ahmad. According to Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., this hadith is *hasan*. See al-Arnaaoot, et al., footnotes to *Musnad*, vol. 28, p. 547.

You guide whom You will to the Straight Path'[1]… Also say, 'O teacher of Abraham, teach me'…"[2] In another letter, he wrote, "Implore Allah with an attentive heart, especially in the pre-dawn hours, that He may guide you to the truth and allow you to see falsehood as falsehood. And flee with your faith for in front of you is Paradise and Hell-fire."[3]

This turning to Allah is very important for getting guidance and to make the correct decisions concerning a matter. Yet it is also of great importance with respect to having Allah fill one's heart with the true faith. Muslim records the following hadith on the authority of the Companion Zaid ibn Arqam:

كَانَ رسولُ الله صلى اللهم علَيه وسلم يقُولُ اللهم إِني أَعوذُ بِك من الْعجز والْكَسلِ والْجبنِ والْبخلِ والْهرمِ وعذَابِ الْقَبرِ اللهم آت نفْسِي تقْواها وزكها أَنت خير من زكاها أَنت وليها ومولاها اللهم إِني أَعوذُ بِك من علْمٍ لا ينفَع ومن قَلْبٍ لا يخشع ومن نفْسٍ لا تشبع ومن دعوة لا يستجاب لَها

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to say, "O Allah, I seek refuge in you from being incapable, lazy, cowardly, miserly, senile and [I also seek refuge in You from] the punishment in the grave. O Allah, give my soul its *taqwa* ['God-consciousness'] and purify it. You are the best to purify it. You are its guardian and protector. O Allah, I seek refuge in You from knowledge that is not benefiting, a heart that is not fearing, a soul that cannot be satisfied and a supplication that is not responded to."

A strange phenomenon that is quite common is where a person readily has a hatred for sinful acts, such as adultery and fornication, yet does not have that same kind of feeling for the much more grievous act of associating partners with Allah. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab addressed this problem. He wrote, while referring to *shirk*, "There are two causes which will make you recognize it [and treat it] like you recognize [and treat] licentious acts and hate it like you hate those:

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[1] Recorded by Muslim.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 256.
[3] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 305.

One [cause] is turning to Allah and praying often for guidance to the Straight Path with a fully attentive heart…”[1]

Refusal to Compromise the Fundamental Beliefs

Allah tells the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

فَلَا تُطِعِ ٱلۡمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٨﴾ وَدُّواْ لَوۡ تُدۡهِنُ فَيُدۡهِنُونَ

“So (O Muhammad) obey not the deniers. They wish that you should compromise (in religion out of courtesy) with them, so they (too) would compromise with you” (*al-Qalam* 8-9).

In fact, the disbelievers offered a compromise to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They offered that their gods would be worshiped for a year and then Muhammad’s God would be worshiped for a year. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) refused this offer and then Allah revealed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) *soorah al-Kaafiroon* which reads,

قُلۡ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلۡكَٰفِرُونَ ﴿١﴾ لَآ أَعۡبُدُ مَا تَعۡبُدُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَآ أَنتُمۡ عَٰبِدُونَ مَآ أَعۡبُدُ ﴿٣﴾

وَلَآ أَنَا۠ عَابِدٞ مَّا عَبَدتُّمۡ ﴿٤﴾ وَلَآ أَنتُمۡ عَٰبِدُونَ مَآ أَعۡبُدُ ﴿٥﴾ لَكُمۡ دِينُكُمۡ وَلِيَ دِينِ ﴿٦﴾

“Say: O disbelievers. I do not worship what you worship nor do you worship what I worship. Nor shall I worship what you worship nor shall you worship what I worship. For you is your religion and for me my religion” (*al-Kaafiroon* 1-6).[2]

In the life of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, one can find someone who was attacked on all fronts. Even though he was greatly in need of support and aid to fend off those foes, not once does one find him compromising on any of the fundamental teachings of Islam. In particular, he did not make a compromise with those supposed “people of knowledge” who were differing with him concerning the meaning of *shirk*. He once wrote to his opponent Abdul-Wahhaab ibn Abdullah ibn Isa, “If you thought in your mind that I wanted to

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 200.
[2] See ibn Katheer, vol. 8, p. 507.

compromise with you concerning the religion, even if you were more important to us than you are [I would not do so]…”[1] Indeed, upon coming to al-Diriyyah and making the historic pact with Muhammad ibn Saud, ibn Saud offered him two conditions, as described earlier. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab explicitly accepted the first and implicitly rejected the second, even though at the time he was greatly in need of ibn Saud’s support and a place of refuge.

This does not mean that there are no points that may be compromised. In the treaty process at Hudaibiyyah, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) compromised on points such as writing the words *al-Rahmaan* (“the Compassionate”) or “the Messenger of Allah” into the treaty. However, these kinds of issues do not touch the core of the faith. If something of this nature is proposed and there is some expected overriding benefit, these issues need not be insisted upon.

This is a fundamental point that should be clear in every Muslim’s mind. As in the example of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself and as in the example of the scholars who came after him, such as ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, there are certain aspects of this faith that cannot be compromised whatsoever. Indeed, compromising on such aspects would be tantamount to discarding the faith. One has to remain true to Allah and His religion in those types of matters.

Using All Available Permissible Means for the Sake of the Mission

The one who is working for the sake of Allah should avail himself—or at least his call or movement—of all the available permissible means to spread this noble message. Concentrating on one mean or a very limited set of means may retard the movement and keep it from reaching its true potential. Allah points to the Prophet Noah who relentlessly exhausted himself and used all avenues to call his people to the truth. The Quran states,

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, 280.

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّى دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِى لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا ﴿٥﴾ فَلَمْ يَزِدْهُمْ دُعَآءِىٓ إِلَّا فِرَارًا ﴿٦﴾ وَإِنِّى كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ جَعَلُوٓا۟ أَصَٰبِعَهُمْ فِىٓ ءَاذَانِهِمْ وَٱسْتَغْشَوْا۟ ثِيَابَهُمْ وَأَصَرُّوا۟ وَٱسْتَكْبَرُوا۟ ٱسْتِكْبَارًا ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ إِنِّى دَعَوْتُهُمْ جِهَارًا ﴿٨﴾ ثُمَّ إِنِّىٓ أَعْلَنتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُ لَهُمْ إِسْرَارًا

"He said: 'O my Lord! I have called to my people night and day. But all my calling added nothing but to (their) flight (from the truth). And verily! Every time I called unto them that You might forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, covered themselves up with their garments, and persisted (in their refusal), and magnified themselves in pride. So I have called to them aloud and further I have spoken to them in public and secretly in private" (*Nooh* 5-9).

One finds the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) using the different means available at his time. He sent letters to foreign leaders, he met with delegations and so forth.

The same is true with respect to Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He gave sermons and lectures. In his speeches, he would use words of encouragement as well as intimidation. He sent teachers to different areas and issued religious verdicts. He also met with delegations and privately with others when needed. He would debate with people. He sent letters and wrote books. He would respond to accusations and allegations.

Allah ordered the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to use different approaches depending on the type of person he was conveying the message to. Allah said to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

ٱدْعُ إِلَىٰ سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِٱلْحِكْمَةِ وَٱلْمَوْعِظَةِ ٱلْحَسَنَةِ ۖ وَجَٰدِلْهُم بِٱلَّتِى هِىَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ

"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better" (*al-Nahl* 125). Allah also says,

وَلَا تُجَٰدِلُوٓا۟ أَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ إِلَّا بِٱلَّتِى هِىَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا۟ مِنْهُمْ ۖ

"And argue not with the people of the Scripture, unless it be in (a way) that is better, except with such of them as do wrong" (*al-Ankaboot* 46).

One finds ibn Abdul-Wahhaab applying the teaching of these verses. His letters and speeches to the commoners differed in their language and style from that to the scholars. Furthermore, his style with those who were his followers differed from that with his obstinate opponents. When refuting the completely false allegations against him, for example, he would use harsh words that would remind his opponent of Allah and the sin that he is committing. In writing about his opponent al-Muwais, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab stated, "You have seen me calling him with gentleness and at the same time I was patient in the face of grave things from him."[1] After it became clear to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab that al-Muwais was nothing more than an arrogant, obstinate opponent to the truth, he changed his approach and used much more deserving terms for al-Muwais. For example, once he wrote about al-Muwais' words, "[Words like that] could only come from the most ignorant of people."[2] On the other hand, when dealing with those he felt were open to the truth, his words would be filled with clear truths from the Quran and Sunnah and words of encouragement to follow the truth.

Another aspect that one finds in the life of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab is that he used whatever authority Allah had given him. This was especially noticeable in al-Uyainah, where with the backing of the ruler he was able to remove the sites of *shirk*, as well as after moving to al-Diriyyah. He would use force when necessary and allowed by Islamic Law to further remove falsehood and implement what is true. Too many times people in authority do not use their authority in the proper manner, in a way that is available to them. Perhaps they are afraid of losing some of their popularity or being criticized and so forth. However, no one should fear anyone more than he fears Allah. Every Muslim should be most concerned with pleasing Allah even at the expense of displeasing someone in this world.

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 141.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 140.

The Caller Himself and Those With Him Must Apply the Principles of the Call

Allah says,

لَّقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ ٱللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلْيَوْمَ ٱلْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ ٱللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

"Indeed in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the meeting with) Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much" (*al-Ahzaab* 21).

Faith, as is very clear throughout all of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings, is not simply a theoretical or abstract matter. For one's faith to be authentic, it must be put into practice. Thus, Al-Abood noted, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab concentrated on two important aspects within a human: the ability to reason or think and the ability to act. He stressed that either one of these two may be faulty. Thus, one must work to protect both of these from error. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab made this conclusion while discussing the verse,

وَكَأَيِّن مِّنْ ءَايَةٍ فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ يَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُم بِٱللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُم مُّشْرِكُونَ

"And how many a sign in the heavens and the earth they pass by, while they are averse therefrom. And most of them believe not in Allah except that they attribute partners unto Him" (*Yoosuf* 105-106). Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab concludes from this verse that if the majority of the people were to believe, they would still fall into practices of *shirk*. This is a weakness or defect with respect to the ability to act; in other words, it is using this ability in the wrong way. But from the portion before the last verse, he notes that many humans do not even use their minds in the proper ways to reflect and benefit from the signs around them. This is a defect in their use of the ability to reason. Both of these two abilities have to be steered into the right directions and used properly for the desired result to come about.[1]

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[1] Cf., al-Abood, vol. 2, pp. 9-10; Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 5, p. 177.

In particular, the leader must be a leader in practice also, not just in words and ideas. This was the case with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and it was also the case with the reformer ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. He truly led by example. For example, he simply did not tell people that gravesites that had become objects of worship must be abolished and then expect his followers alone to go out and fulfill that teaching. When it came to destroying the tomb over the grave of Zaid ibn al-Khattaab, it was ibn Abdul-Wahhaab who took the lead and began the demolition. Furthermore, he strictly adhered to the pillars of the faith and made sure that those around him did the same. He once wrote, "I oblige those under my authority to establish the prayer, give the zakat and perform all other of Allah's commandments and I also forbid them from interest, drinking intoxicants and other lewd acts."[1]

The importance of the example for the call or movement as a whole should not be underestimated. Without the example—somebody showing all the others that the goals and ideals of the call can truly be put into practice—many may feel that what the call or movement is aspiring to is no more than mere dreams and chasing after clouds in the sky. But once people see it truly being put into practice by the leader and the devoted followers around him, they no longer have this excuse and must, if they are sincere believers, force themselves to try to live up to the ideals of the teachings of the faith.

The Importance of Refuting the Doubts and Allegations Concerning the True Call

As noted earlier, the call or teachings are going to be met with opposition. A lesson that one can get from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's approach is that one should not allow the false allegations spread to be left unanswered. The allegations can be very dangerous for the call or movement—even when the call or movement is completely based on truth. They must be refuted. Hence, much of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's time was spent in refuting the false claims and misconceptions that were being spread about him, his message and his followers. Thus, everyone, follower and foe alike, will have the truth clearly in front of

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 36.

them. The followers’ mindsets will be clearer and their thoughts will not be opened to doubts when the issues are clearly answered for them. As for the foes, Allah may open their hearts to the truth via sound arguments or Allah may make the proof completely established against them.

The basis for this approach is found in the Quran. For example, concerning Noah, Allah says,

قَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي ضَلَٰلَةٌ وَلَٰكِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٦١﴾
أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَٰلَٰتِ رَبِّي وَأَنصَحُ لَكُمْ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“He said, ‘O my people! There is no error in me, but I am a Messenger from the Lord of all that exists)! I convey unto you the Messages of my Lord and give sincere advice to you. And I know from Allah what you know not’” (*al-Araaf* 61-62). And similarly about Hood, Allah has said,

قَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي سَفَاهَةٌ وَلَٰكِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ أُبَلِّغُكُمْ
رِسَٰلَٰتِ رَبِّي وَأَنَا۠ لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ أَمِينٌ

“He said, ‘O my people! There is no foolishness in me, but (I am) a Messenger from the Lord of the all that exists! I convey unto you the messages of my Lord, and I am a trustworthy adviser (or well-wisher) for you’” (*al-Araaf* 67-68).

One can include under this subheading the importance of pointing out the means and ways of the enemies of the truth. Allah has instructed the believers in the Quran concerning the ways of the followers of falsehood. Allah says,

وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ ٱلْءَايَٰتِ وَلِتَسْتَبِينَ سَبِيلُ ٱلْمُجْرِمِينَ

“And thus do We explain the signs in detail, that the way of the sinners may become manifest” (*al-Anaam* 55). This is important for keeping the sincere from being misled and fooled by the evildoers. Thus, in the Quran, Allah explains in very explicit fashion the plots and strategy of Satan, the disbelievers, the Jews, the Christians, the polytheists and the hypocrites.

Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab understood the importance of this topic. In writing to Muhammad ibn Sultaan, who was going to debate with people from al-Ahsaa, he told him, "Be aware of the people of al-Ahsaa as they may try to trick you by some matters that are not related to the issue or they may confuse you by some false words."[1] In a letter to the judge Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Ahsaa`ee, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab advised him concerning the dangers of taking the words of the evildoers at face value. In this important letter, he explained to the judge the manner in which the evildoers and hypocrites behave. He tells him not to be hasty. He adds, "Allah has described the hypocrites in His book by their characteristics, and He has also explained the branches of hypocrisy, so that they may be avoided and so that its people may be avoided. Allah describes them as having eloquence and fine speech. He even states that they have a good appearance." Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab then goes on to discuss their evil characteristics and means as stated by Allah in the Quran.[2]

Indeed, in many of his books and writings, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab has exposed the ways of the disbelievers, hypocrites and evildoers. In particular, one may refer to *Masaail al-Jaahiliyyah* ("The Issues of the Period of Ignorance") and *Kashf al-Shubuhaat* ("Clarification of Misunderstandings").

There is a final important note to mention. As shall be noted, Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's opponents resorted to falsehood and abuse. However, in his defense, he never resorted to such behavior. He simply presented the truth established in the Quran and Sunnah. He allowed that truth to stand for itself. He realized that, like the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), there is no excuse or reason to turn to means that are disliked by Allah.

Realizing What Means the Enemies of the Truth May Resort to

The way of disbelief can have a strong hold for those whose life is patterned on such misguidance and desires. It is not an easy task to convince people to give up a life that they have enjoyed for a long time, that their fathers had passed on to them or that they are materially benefiting from. Thus Allah says in the Quran about the

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 145.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 251.

polytheists during the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

كَبُرَ عَلَى ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ

"Intolerable for the polytheists is that to which you call them" (*al-Shoora* 13). Only when one understands this fact can one understand how the disbelievers at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) resorted to all types of attacks upon the person of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to dissuade him, his followers and anyone who considered following him. He lived among them for many years and was known as "the trustworthy one." But as soon as he started calling them to the truth and pointing out the errors of their ways, nothing was too vile for them to stoop to. They even called him a liar although they knew very well that a man like Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would never stoop to lying.

Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's life also demonstrates that nothing is too low for the enemies to resort to. In reading the words of his opponents, one finds blatant lies and fabrications, distortions of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's statements, distortions of the meanings of the Quran and Sunnah. All of these things occurred during his own lifetime. However, such is not surprising. These same type of people, his opponents, showed no respect for the Quran, the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or the way of the Companions. Hence, it is not surprising that they showed and continue to show neither decency nor respect when dealing with a "poor uncultured desert Arab from Najd."

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had to face a great deal of harm from the hypocrites. However, many—not all—in the Madinan society realized that such people were nothing but hypocrites and their words should be given no weight at all. During the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and also nowadays, the situation has become somewhat more difficult because it is the supposed leaders and scholars of Islam today who are opposing the way of the early, pious Muslims. Some, for example, get their degrees in Western schools and earn the respect of both Muslims and non-Muslims and they have no qualms in ridiculing or criticizing the way of the

Companions—even the way of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself.

Every Muslim worker who desires to call people back to the way of the Quran should realize that such people exist. He may have to hear all sorts of false accusations, lies and innuendo being spread about him. However, like the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and those who followed in his footsteps, such as ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, this should not deter anyone from following and calling to the way of Allah, the path whose truth is clear and unquestionable.

Finally, one may ask a very simple question: Why is it that the enemies of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the enemies of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab (even those today) and the enemies of all Muslim workers who simply proclaim the clear truth of the Quran and Sunnah always seem to resort to such lying and fabricating? The answer, to this author, is quite clear. The opponents of the truth have absolutely nothing to stand on in the face of the clear and unequivocal injunctions of the Quran and Sunnah. They cannot possibly debate against the truth in an honest and straightforward fashion. They cannot support their claims on the basis of clear verses, authentic hadith or even logic. Hence, they have to resort to deception and trickery. It is nothing more than a last gasp effort to try to save themselves. Allah willing, as often as they come with falsehood, their plots and lies will be defeated and refuted in the end.

Importance of Being United with the Muslims Whenever Possible

In numerous verses of the Quran, there is the exhortation to be united and not to divide within the religion. For example, Allah says,

وَٱعْتَصِمُوا۟ بِحَبْلِ ٱللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا۟ۚ

"And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah (this Qur'aan), and be not divided among yourselves" (*ali-Imraan* 103). The basic principle of this verse is there should be unity, but that unity must be based on what Allah has revealed. Any type of "unity" that violates what Allah has revealed is not the desired unity, because it will not be holding all together unto the rope of Allah.

As was noted above, Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would never compromise concerning any matter that is definitive in the Quran and

Sunnah. However, concerning those matters in which there is room for *ijtihaad* (juristic reasoning), he would be as accommodating as possible, unifying the Muslims and bringing their hearts together. Among other things, this demonstrated—and only Allah knows the inner secrets—that his intent was not to rule over people or to be harsh with people. Instead, it is apparent that his intent was only that of goodness, trying to bring the people to the path of Allah. For example, as was noted in Chapter 3, he would leave the people to follow their own schools of fiqh, unless there was something established by unequivocal evidence in the Quran or Sunnah (such as requiring the stillness and calmness in each position of the prayer).

Furthermore, in dialogue, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab would stress the common beliefs that the discussants held. In numerous letters, for example, he would stress that he believed in the intercession given to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) by Allah, the importance of respecting the Imams of the four schools of fiqh, the importance of loving and respecting the pious and righteous and so on. However, at the same time, he would stress what is common and derived from the Quran and Sunnah but would not accept anything that is beyond that. In his letter to the people of al-Qaseem, for example, he wrote, “I affirm the miracles of the pious and what they have of having the truth shown to them. However, [by such things] they do not deserve any of the worship of Allah nor should anything that only Allah can do be sought from them.”[1] In the same letter, he also discusses in detail his belief about the Messenger’s intercession and where he agrees with his opponents and where he disagrees with them.[2]

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[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 11.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, pp. 9-10. Cf., Abdul-Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 2, pp. 762-763.

Realizing that the Worker May Not See All of the Fruits of His Efforts in His Lifetime

Allah says,

كَذَٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْحَقَّ وَٱلْبَٰطِلَ ۚ فَأَمَّا ٱلزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَآءً ۖ وَأَمَّا مَا يَنفَعُ ٱلنَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْأَمْثَالَ

"Thus does Allah (by parables) show forth truth and falsehood. Then, as for the foam it passes away as scum upon the banks, while that which is for the good of mankind remains in the earth. Thus Allah sets forth parables (for the truth and falsehood)" (*al-Rad* 17).

The believer is only responsible for putting forth the proper efforts. The end results of his actions are left to Allah. A Muslim cannot make another individual believe, as Allah told the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِى مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِٱلْمُهْتَدِينَ

"Verily! You (O Muhammad) guide not whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He knows best those who are the guided" (*al-Qasas* 56). Nor, in most cases, does an individual have the power to change a people or their state. However, everybody has some means available to him and he is responsible only to the limit of his capability. Within those means, he will be rewarded for what he has done and held responsible for his incorrect acts. Allah has said,

لَا يُكَلِّفُ ٱللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا ٱكْتَسَبَتْ ۗ

"Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope. He gets reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned" (*al-Baqarah* 286).

In the case of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, he was able to see many of the fruits of his efforts. A strong state was established based on the message he was teaching. That state was able to rule all of Najd and portions of the rest of the peninsula by the time of the death of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. The society and, most importantly, the beliefs of the people completely changed as ibn Abdul-Wahhaab propagated the true message of Islam.

However, that is just a small portion of the fruits of his labor. His descendents and followers continue to propagate the true message of monotheism (*tauheed*) long after his death. Due to the help of Allah and then the efforts of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, the message of *tauheed* has reached all the corners of the world today. Even in the United States today, for example, when a person converts to Islam, he is more often than not exposed to a true Islam based on the Quran and Sunnah, free of idolatry and *shirk*. Many times that true message comes to the convert via people who have been directly or indirectly, knowingly or unknowingly, influenced by the teachings of or the revival started by Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

Truth or Falsehood is Not To be Affirmed Simply Based on Numbers

A point that Allah has alluded to in numerous places in the Quran is that the sheer number of adherents to a creed does not in any way indicate the soundness of that creed. For example, Allah says,

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَٰذَا ٱلْقُرْءَانِ مِن كُلِّ مَثَلٍ فَأَبَىٰٓ أَكْثَرُ ٱلنَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا

“And indeed We have fully explained to mankind, in this Qur'aan, every kind of similitude, but most mankind refuse (the truth and accept nothing) but disbelief” (*al-Israa* 89). Allah also says,

وَإِن تُطِعْ أَكْثَرَ مَن فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا ٱلظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَن يَضِلُّ عَن سَبِيلِهِۦ ۖ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِٱلْمُهْتَدِينَ

“And if you obey most of those on earth, they will mislead you far away from Allah's Path. They follow nothing but conjectures, and they do nothing but lie. Verily, your Lord! It is He Who knows best who strays from His Way, and He knows best the rightly guided ones” (*Al-Anaam* 116).

Thus, one should never be fooled by or deceived by mere numbers. It is very possible that the masses—even the Muslim masses—may be deceived and may follow falsehood. Those who recognize and follow the truth may be a very small number indeed.

However, the important point that each and every Muslim must remember is not the number of companions but whether they are in fact along the Straight Path that is pleasing to Allah. As long as one can be certain that what he is following or believing in can be clearly proven from the Quran and Sunnah—the ultimate authorities—he never has to worry whether or not it is consistent with what the masses are following. In fact, Allah told the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

وَمَآ أَكۡثَرُ ٱلنَّاسِ وَلَوۡ حَرَصۡتَ بِمُؤۡمِنِينَ

"Yet no faith will the greater part of mankind have, however ardently you [O Muhammad] do desire it" (*Yoosuf* 103)

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab is one scholar who clearly understood this concept and realized that a Muslim must be ready to face a situation where he, by following the truth, is very much in the minority and may even be despised. However, the truth must always be supported and adhered to, no matter how great the opposition. Such is a virtuous act indeed. In responding to a question put forth to him, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab wrote, "Know first that if the truth shines forth and is clear, it is not harmed by the large numbers who oppose it and the small numbers who agree with it. You know how some aspects of *tauheed* have become strange, although they are clearer than the prayer and fasting; and that [strangeness] does not harm it at all."[1] Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also wrote, "I do not know of anything more virtuous in getting one nearer to Allah than adhering to the path of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) during times of 'strangeness.' If one adds to that striving against the disbelievers and hypocrites, that forms the completeness of faith. In fact, the most virtuous jihad is striving against the hypocrites during times of 'strangeness.'"[2]

Vassiliev wrote, "In the present writer's opinion, however, the Wahhabis were sectarians precisely because they opposed Sunnism in its then dominant form, even though from the position of wanting to 'purify' it."[3] What Vassiliev touched upon is actually very important in evaluating the "Wahhabis" or any similar call. It may be one of the

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 3, section on *Fatawa*, p. 88.
[2] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 288.
[3] Vassiliev, p. 75.

reasons that the "Wahhabis" were criticized and attacked. The outsiders will call such people who adhere to the truth, regardless of what the masses are following, "sectarians." In reality, though, this is the proper or acceptable type of "sectarianism." If the people as a whole are ignoring the truth, one has to adhere to the truth, even though it will make him appear as an outsider or a "sectarian." It is as the Companion ibn Masood told Amr ibn Maimoon after advising him to the stick to the *jamaah* ("congregation, community") and then told him to pray alone if the rulers delay the prayer. This seemed to be a contradiction to Amr, so he asked ibn Masood about that. Ibn Masood explained to him, "The *jamaah* is whoever is in agreement with the truth, even if it be just you by yourself."[1] In other words, it is the truth that one must adhere to, even if that makes one "an outsider" with respect to the masses who may be following a different way.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) spoke of a time in which this will be the proper course of action for a believer. In fact, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

بدأ الإِسلام غَرِيبا وسيعود كَما بدأ غَرِيبا فَطُوبى للْغرباءِ

"Islam began as something strange and it will return as it began [that is, as being something strange]. So glad tidings of *Tooba* [a tree in Paradise] for the strangers." (Recorded by Muslim.) Another narration describes those "strangers" as:

أُناس صالحونَ في أُناسٍ سوءٍ كَثـ ٍ من يعصيهم أَكْثَر ممن يطيعهم

"Pious people among evil people. Those who disobey them are more than those who obey them."[2]

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab also gave the following advice, "If you find it difficult to go against what the people are doing, ponder over Allah's words…" and then he quoted the following verses of the Quran:

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[1] Quoted in Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, p. 236.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad. According to al-Albaani, this narration is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 728.

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَـٰكَ عَلَىٰ شَرِيعَةٍ مِّنَ ٱلْأَمْرِ فَٱتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَآءَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّهُمْ لَن يُغْنُوا۟ عَنكَ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ شَيْـًٔا ۚ وَإِنَّ ٱلظَّـٰلِمِينَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ وَلِىُّ ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ

"Then We have put you (O Muhammad) on a plain way of (Our) commandment. So follow you that, and follow not the desires of those who know not. Verily, they can avail you nothing against Allah (if He wants to punish you). Verily, the wrongdoers are protectors to one another, but Allah is the Protector pious" (*al-Jaathiyah* 18-19); and,

وَإِن تُطِعْ أَكْثَرَ مَن فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا ٱلظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ

"And if you obey most of those on earth, they will mislead you far away from Allah's Path. They follow nothing but conjectures, and they do nothing but lie" (*al-Anaam* 116).[1]

Some Muslims find it very strange that people, even Muslims, can be presented the truth from the Quran and Sunnah yet they refuse to follow it. However, Allah has explained the real motivation and reality behind such acts when He consoled the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

فَإِن لَّمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا۟ لَكَ فَٱعْلَمْ أَنَّمَا يَتَّبِعُونَ أَهْوَآءَهُمْ ۚ وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ ٱتَّبَعَ هَوَىٰهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلظَّـٰلِمِينَ

"But if they answer you not, then know that they only follow their own lusts. And who is more astray than one who follows his own lusts, without guidance from Allah? Verily! Allah guides not the people who are wrongdoers" (*al-Qasas* 50).

Finally, as al-Husain alluded to, the present time is a time in which the commoners do not distinguish between what Allah has said and what the ignorant or the so-called "educated" among the humans

[1] Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, pp. 256-257.

say.[1] This is very true. One can have a verse or a hadith in front of oneself and a contrary statement of an individual—a scholar, a writer, a speaker or whatever—and a Muslim may give the two equal weight. Indeed, the statement of the individual may even be given more weight because he is writing "in the current times…," in the 21st Century where things have changed and need be looked at afresh. Sadly, today there may not be the trees and shrubs that the people of Najd venerated before the influence of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, but there are new idols. Perhaps these idols are even stronger idols, in the form of "ideas" and "isms," such as modernism, feminism, democracy, nationalism and so on. Many Muslims are being swept away by these concepts and ignoring or forgetting about the noble, perfect and perpetual guidance of the Quran.

The Importance of Understanding the Contemporary Reality

This is one aspect that was clearly seen in ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's approach. He analyzed the practices, faults and virtues of the people around him. From his own experience and study, he realized the roots of the problems of society. He did not speak about the truth in abstract terms. Instead, he tied those teachings directly into the practices of the people during his time. Indeed, this was a major cause of contention since he did not just say, for example, "Allah is to be obeyed" and leave it that. Instead, he would say, for example, "Allah is to be obeyed and that which you are doing today is a violation of that teaching…" Knowing these roots allowed him to concentrate on the main ways that these problems could be solved. In so doing, he concentrated on what the people needed. As was noted earlier, he even used colloquial language when needed to allow the people to understand exactly what he was speaking about.

Thus, Idris, while noting ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's admiration for ibn Taimiyyah and his extensive quoting of him, stated that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's style was very different from ibn Taimiyyah's. Idris gave the following explanation,

> Ibn Taymiyyah had lived in Damascus at a time when it was teeming with philosophers, philosophical theologians, Sufis,

[1] Cf., al-Husain, p. 7.

> Christians and Jewish scholars, scientists, and so on. But Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab lived in a simple cultural milieu where there was no such erudition. He therefore steered clear of Ibn Taymiyyah's style. While Ibn Taymiyyah resorted to elaborate, and in many cases [purely] rational, arguments to buttress and defend Quranic teachings on theological matters, 'Abd al-Wahhab was mostly content with religious evidence. He avoided the subject of philosophical theology altogether. With the exception of his personal letters, his style is legalistic, concise, and somewhat terse.[1]

Often speakers or scholars may bring up topics that are not relevant or not being discussed today. They may be old issues which ibn Taimiyyah, for example, spoke about in response to the ongoing discussions of his time but which, since his time, are not discussed among the majority of the people. Often these topics are not topics directly touched upon by the Quran but delved into by later scholars. However, upon bringing such topics up, the scholar causes more harm than good by causing division over a subject that was not originally touched upon by the Quran in the first place and which was a dead subject among the people. It is a skill and requires true scholarship to take a teaching—either from the Quran, Sunnah or earlier scholar like ibn Taimiyyah—and know how to apply it, express it and teach it in one's own environment. It is also a skill to know what the people truly need to be taught at the current time given their contemporary views and ways of thinking. This is a very important process in the path of *dawah* and further points to ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's great genius.

Ascribing Partners to Allah (*Shirk*) is The Greatest Evil and All Means Must Be Taken to Avoid It

The greatest lesson that can be learned from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and the concept that was most prominent in his message is: *Shirk* (the associating of partners with Allah in any way whatsoever) is the greatest of all evils. It seems appropriate at the end of this chapter, coming at the end of this work on the life and teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, to delve into the concept of *shirk* in more detail. The conclusion can be stated now: The issue is exactly as Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab preached. *Shirk* is the greatest evil. A Muslim should

[1] Idris, p. 5.

avoid it at all costs. Indeed, all of the means that lead to it should be blocked by individuals, scholars and the Muslim community as a whole. It is completely irresponsible on the part of any Muslim—whether he be hailed as a scholar or not—to be lackadaisical or remiss on this issue or to excuse any form of *shirk* or any of the means that lead to *shirk*. This is not solely the conclusion of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab. This is what is clear in the Quran. This is what was taught and implemented by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). And this is the view upheld by the four schools of fiqh.

Allah speaks about *shirk* throughout the Quran. Of those numerous verses, only a handful will be presented here. However, this handful will demonstrate without any doubt that *shirk* is most hateful to Allah. In fact, if a person knowingly practices and dies in a state of *shirk*, it is the sin that the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful, the Oft-Forgiving and Ever-Pardoning does not forgive. Allah has said,

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَمَن يُشْرِكْ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدِ ٱفْتَرَىٰٓ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا

"Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him in worship, but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He pleases, and whoever sets up partners with Allah in worship, he has indeed invented a tremendous sin" (*al-Nisaa* 48). Allah repeats that same stern warning when He says,

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَمَن يُشْرِكْ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَٰلًا بَعِيدًا

"Verily! Allah forgives not (the sin of) setting up partners in worship with Him, but He forgives whom he pleases sins other than that, and whoever sets up partners in worship with Allah, has indeed strayed far away" (*al-Nisaa* 116).

It does not matter if the supposed "partner" was from the most pious of all of mankind, such as a messenger set by Allah, or even an angel. There is no excuse to ever associate any partner with Allah. It even goes against the ingrain nature of humans. Hence, the person

who resorts to it will be forever forbidden entrance into Paradise. Thus has Allah said,

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ ٱلْمَسِيحُ ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۖ وَقَالَ ٱلْمَسِيحُ يَٰبَنِىٓ
إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ رَبِّى وَرَبَّكُمْ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ مَن يُشْرِكْ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ ٱلْجَنَّةَ
وَمَأْوَىٰهُ ٱلنَّارُ ۖ وَمَا لِلظَّٰلِمِينَ مِنْ أَنصَارٍ ﴿٧٢﴾ لَّقَدْ كَفَرَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ
ثَالِثُ ثَلَٰثَةٍ ۘ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَٰهٍ إِلَّآ إِلَٰهٌ وَٰحِدٌ ۚ وَإِن لَّمْ يَنتَهُوا۟ عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ
ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

"Surely, they have disbelieved who say, 'Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary.' But the Messiah said, 'O Children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.' Verily, whosoever sets up partners in worship with Allah, then Allah has forbidden Paradise for him, and the Fire will be his abode. And for the wrongdoers there are no helpers. Surely, disbelievers are those who said, 'Allah is the third of the three (in a Trinity).' But there is no God but One God. And if they cease not from what they say, verily, a painful torment will befall the disbelievers among them" (*al-Maaidah* 72-73).

Probably all the readers are very familiar with verses such as those above that emphasize how distasteful *shirk* is to Allah. The next point to be stressed is the great extent the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went to in order to prevent any act that may eventually lead to the development or growth of *shirk*. It is simply unfortunate that so much of what he had to say was simply ignored by later Muslims.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prohibited many acts that, in the understanding of the scholars, were prohibited because they could eventually lead to *shirk*. In fact, many of the acts that he prohibited did actually lead to *shirk* in earlier communities. Allah describes the people of Noah as saying,

وَقَالُوا۟ لَا تَذَرُنَّ ءَالِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا وَلَا سُوَاعًا وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا

"And they have said (to each other), 'You shall not leave your gods, nor shall you leave Wadd, nor Suwaa', nor Yaghooth, nor Ya'ooq, nor

Nasr'[1]" (*Nooh* 23). It is explained in the books of Quranic commentary that these were the names of pious individuals during the time of Noah. After they died, Satan inspired some people to erect monuments where they used to sit and to name those monuments by their names. They did so. However, the practice of worshipping them did not actually start until those people who built those altars died and the reason why those were built was forgotten. After that time, the people started to worship these as idols.[2] Note that those deceased people were pious people but later folk came along and did not realize the real reasons that those monuments were put there. They thus fell into *shirk*. When the ignorant Muslims of today go to the tombs of al-Badawi in Egypt or al-Husain and see the masses praying, weeping and pleading there, it is not a stretch of the imagination to expect that they will fall into this same type of *shirk*. It is the role of the Muslim scholars and rulers, like ibn Abdul-Wahhaab and Muhammad ibn Saud, to prevent this from occurring.

It is not uncommon to find mosques built upon graves in the Muslim world, which obviously also directly leads to the same type of *shirk*. This is in complete disobedience to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said,

ألا وإن من كَانَ قَبلَكُم كَانوا يتخذُونَ قُبور أنبِيائهم وصالحيهم مساجِد ألا فَـلا تتخذُوا الْقُبور مساجِد إني أنهاكُم عن ذَلك

"Certainly those before you took the gravesites of their prophets and righteous folk as mosques. Certainly you should not take gravesites as mosques. I forbid you from that." (Recorded by Muslim.) This same type of instruction is actually found in numerous hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). For example, Aishah narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stated during his illness from which he died,

لَعن الله الْيهود والنصارى اتخذُوا قُبور أنبِيائهم مسجِدا

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[1] These are names of different idols that they used to worship.
[2] Cf., ibn Katheer, vol. 8, pp. 234-235.

“Allah cursed the Jews and Christians for they took the graves of their prophets as mosques.” (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said,

واعلَموا أن شرار الناسِ الذين اتخذُوا قُبور أنبيائهم مساجِد

“Know that the worst of all people are those who take the graves of their prophets as mosques.”[1]

One can see from the examples of the previous peoples that the graves of deceased pious—or sometimes even impious—people can be the greatest threat to the purity of one’s *tauheed*. Hence, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), as inspired by Allah, blocked all the means that could possibly lead to a grave tempting a person to an incorrect act of worship. Thus, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prohibited elevating graves, writing on them, sitting on them, taking them as mosques, facing them while praying and undertaking a journey solely to visit them.[2]

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was also obviously very concerned about how the people would behave towards him.[3] This was only natural since it was the earlier prophets and righteous individuals who were later worshipped or treated in ways that constitute an affront to the true *tauheed*. Thus, in numerous hadith, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave instructions that clearly indicate that one must be very careful in such a matter. For example, he said,

لا تطْرونِي كَما أطْرت النصارى ابن مريم فَإنما أنا عبده فَقُولُوا عبد الله ورسولُه

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[1] Recorded by Ahmad. According to Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., its chain is *sahih*. See Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., footnotes to *Musnad*, vol. 3, p. 221.

[2] The evidence from the hadith for all of these points may be found in Muhammad al-Khamees, *Bayaan al-Shirk wa Wasaailuhu ind Ulamaa al-Maalikiyyah* (Riyadh: Daar al-Watan, 1413 A.H.), pp. 28-30.

[3] Since many of these instructions are coming from the hadith, the term “the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)…” is being used. However, this does not mean that the matter was simply a case of the Prophet’s own thinking and conclusion. These teachings came from him and were revealed or approved of by Allah.

"Do not overly praise me like the Christians overly praised the son of Mary. I am His slave-servant, so say, 'Servant of Allah and His Messenger.'" (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

In a number of hadith, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also warned about the words one uses while expressing the issue of "will." For example, in one such hadith, a person said to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), "Whatever Allah has willed and what you will." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told him,

أجعلْتنِي والله عدلاً بلْ ما شاءَ الله وحده

"Have you made me and Allah equals? Instead, [you should say] what Allah alone wills."[1]

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went even further to prevent any road to *shirk*. For example, Thaabit ibn al-Dhahhaak reported:

نذَر رجلٌ علَى عهد رسولِ الله صلى اللهم علَيه وسلم أنْ ينحر إِبِلًا بِبوانةَ فَـأتى النبِي صلى اللهم علَيه وسلم فَقَالَ إِني نذَرت أنْ أنحر إِبِلًا بِبوانةَ فَقَالَ النبِي صـلى اللهم علَيه وسلم هلْ كَانَ فيها وثَن من أوثَان الْجاهلية يعبد قَالُوا لا قَالَ هلْ كَانَ فيها عيد من أعيادهم قَالُوا لا قَالَ رسولُ الله صلى اللهم علَيه وسلم أوف بِنذْرِك فَإِنه لا وفَاءَ لنذْرٍ في معصية الله ولا فيما لا يملك ابن آدم

During the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), a man made an oath to slaughter a camel at a place called Buwaanah. He came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, "I have made an oath to slaughter a camel at Buwaanah." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked, "Did there used to be an idol worshipped there during the Days of Ignorance?" They answered, "No." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then asked, "Did there used to be one of their celebrations at that place?" They answered, "No." The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon

[1] Recorded by Ahmad. According to Ahmad Shaakir, its chain is *sahih*. See Shaakir, footnotes to ibn Hanbal, vol. 2, p. 423.

him) then said, "Fulfill your vow. But there is no fulfilling of vows in what constitutes disobedience to Allah nor concerning something that a human does not possess."[1]

On another occasion, the Muslim army was heading out to Hunain and passed by the tree on which the polytheists would hang their weapons for the sake of blessings. This tree was called *dhaat al-anwaat*. The Muslims said to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), "Appoint for us a tree like they have *dhaat al-anwaat*." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied,

سبحانَ الله هذَا كَما قَالَ قَوم موسى اجعلْ لَنا إِلَها كَما لَهم آلهةٌ والذي نفْسِي بِيده لَتركَبن سنةَ من كَانَ قَبلَكُم

"Exalted and perfect be Allah. This is just like what the people of Moses said [to Moses,] 'Make for us a god like they have gods.' By the One in whose hand is my soul, you shall certainly follow the ways of the people before you."[2] Commenting on this hadith, ibn Ghannaam wrote,

> Contemplate and think about this hadith. Consider how the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave the ruling, and swore to this ruling, that this action was similar to the statement of the Tribe of Israel to Moses, 'Make for us a god like they have gods.' Even though they did not express that in words, they said it in meaning. Even though they were using their intelligence in that matter, they did not recognize that what they said was similar to what the Tribe of Israel said. Thus, they went to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saying that out of ignorance. Even with all of that, the honest one, the one who is to be believed, informed them, and swore to what he

[1] Recorded by Abu Dawood. According to ibn Hajar and al-Albaani, this hadith is *sahih*. Cf., Ahmad ibn Hajar, *Talkhees al-Habeer fi Takhreej Ahaadeeth al-Rafi'ee al-Kabeer* (Madinah: al-Sayyid Abdullah al-Madani, 1964), vol. 4, p. 180; Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood*, vol. 2, p. 328.

[2] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi and Ahmad. In another narration in Ahmad, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied by saying, "You have said exactly as the people of Moses said…" According to al-Albaani and Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., this hadith is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, vol. 2, p. 235; Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., footnotes to *Musnad*, vol. 36, pp. 225-227.

> informed them, that such was exactly like what the Tribe of Israel said to Moses... If this sternness came from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) toward the Companions when they sought something similar to that of the polytheists, a tree designated to hang their weapons on to get blessings from, what would be the case with something much greater than that: the greater *shirk* that most of the people perform today?[1]

The above is truly just the tip of the iceberg concerning all of the texts that show how the religion of Islam means to keep its adherents away from any trace of *shirk* whatsoever. But it should not be understood, as some opponents seem to imply, that all of this was foreign to the Muslim Nation until ibn Abdul-Wahhaab came along and taught these matters. No, indeed, this was something well-known to the scholars and all four of the schools of fiqh made clear and unequivocal statements that these kinds of acts are to be avoided.[2]

For example, Malik disliked[3] that anyone should stand at the Prophet's grave and make supplications for himself. Instead, he should just greet the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and then move on. Malik and the other scholars of Madinah also disliked for someone to go the Prophet's grave and greet him every time they entered the mosque.[4]

Abu Hanifah and his companions stated that it is not allowed to ask Allah by invoking any of His creation. They also stated that it is prohibited to say in a prayer, "I ask of You by the right of Your prophets." Al-Qadoori, the later Hanafi scholar, after quoting Abu

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[1] Ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, pp. 42-43.

[2] Thus it was possible for ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to quote scholars from all four schools of fiqh to support his opinions against those of his opponents. He even explicitly stated (vol. 7, p. 38) that he debates with followers of each school according to what their own books state, demonstrating that the acts of disbelief are such according to their own scholars. See, in particular, the two letters in which he quoted the different schools at length. Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhaab, *Muallifaat*, vol. 7, pp. 176-180 and 250-267. It is amazing how so many of the people who fall into these acts are adamant supporters of *taqleed* or blindly following the dictates of their fiqh school. Al-Saabiq (p. 13) noted that some of them even say that if one does not follow one of the four schools, he has left Islam. Yet when it comes to these types of matters, the foundations of the faith, they completely ignore their fiqh school, performing a blatant contradiction that is obvious for all to see. Cf., al-Saabiq, pp. 13-14.

[3] "Disliked" in the way these early scholars used this term means that the act is actually prohibited.

[4] Quoted in ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 50.

Hanifah's explicit statement prohibiting such a supplication, said, "It is not allowed to ask by invoking His creation. This is because none of the creation have a right over Him. This is not allowed by agreement [of the scholars]."[1]

Ibn Aqeel, one of the leading Hanbali Imams of the sixth century Hijri, stated,

> When the obligations became difficult upon the ignorant and commoners, they left the affairs of the Shareeah for affairs that they set up for themselves... In my view, they are disbelievers due to such acts. [These acts include] venerating and honoring graves in ways prohibited by the Shareeah, such as putting lamps over them, lighting them, and addressing the deceased with their needs, writing their prayers, saying, 'O leader so and so, do such and such for me,' taking the soil for blessings, pouring perfume over the graves, travelling to visit them...[2]

A contemporary writer, Muhammad al-Khamees, has done a study of the four schools of fiqh and their view of *shirk*. In these works, he delineated what the schools considered *shirk* and what are the means that lead to *shirk*, which are consequently forbidden by those schools. For each of the acts of *shirk* or means to *shirk*, he gives detailed references to standard books of fiqh in each school. For the sake of brevity, his conclusions shall simply be summarized in table form.[3] (Note that al-Khamees at no point claimed a consensus within these schools but he did present references to the most authoritative works within each school that provide these conclusions. Also note that many of the topics are mentioned in explicit authentic hadith. Hence, it is not surprising to find clear agreement on those issues. Note also that not all of the topics that al-Khamees discussed are presented in this table.)

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[1] Quoted in Saabiq, p. 339.

[2] Quoted in ibn Ghannaam, vol. 1, p. 47.

[3] Based on Muhammad al-Khamees, *Bayaan al-Shirk wa Wasaailuhu ind Ulamaa al-Hanafiyyah* (Riyadh: Daar al-Watan, 1413 A.H.), pp. 27-31; al-Khamees, *al-Maalikiyyah*, pp. 27-40; Muhammad al-Khamees, *Bayaan al-Shirk wa Wasaailuhu ind Ulamaa al-Shafi'iyyah* (Riyadh: Daar al-Watan, 1413 A.H.), pp. 29-43; Muhammad al-Khamees, *Bayaan al-Shirk wa Wasaailuhu ind Ulamaa al-Hanaabilah* (Riyadh: Daar al-Watan, 1413 A.H.), pp. 27-33. Note that not all the topics mentioned by al-Khamees in the pages referenced herein are listed in the table.

In each of his studies, al-Khamees also discusses the types of *shirk* and the acts that constitute *shirk* according to scholars of all four schools of fiqh as found in their major reference works.[1] In general, one can say that all of the acts that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab objected to as acts of *shirk* are also mentioned by each of the four schools of fiqh as acts of *shirk* that take one out of the fold of Islam.[2] Hence, again, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was not an innovator bringing something new and unheard of. Instead, he was reviving teachings found in every school of fiqh that had been ignored or forgotten. Those teachings touch the core of Islam and whenever they are ignored or forgotten, it is a must that they be restored.

One can understand from all of these texts and scholarly conclusions that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was completely right when he opposed, with the greatest of effort, *shirk* in all of its manifestations and all the paths that lead to it. The most important thing that a human can be saved from is falling into this evil *shirk*. It is not an overstatement to say that all Muslim leaders and scholars should take great efforts to keep the Muslims from falling into *shirk*. Furthermore, in the light of the Quran and Sunnah, it is completely inexcusable for any Muslim to take this matter lightly—not to speak of attempting to justify as a manifestation of "true Islam" those very same acts that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prohibited. One can only plead to Allah for help and guidance to rescue the Muslim Nation from any form of *shirk* that it currently is engaged in.

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[1] One has to realize that many of the acts of *shirk* appeared after the time of the founders of these schools. Hence, some of them did not mention any of these acts specifically because they simply did not exist and were not an issue at their time.

[2] These acts include praying for help from the deceased, setting up intermediaries between oneself and Allah, sacrificing animals for other than Allah, giving the complete right of obedience to other than Allah and so forth. See al-Khamees, *al-Hanafiyyah*, pp. 15-26 and 31-68; al-Khamees, *al-Maalikiyyah*, pp. 19-25 and 41-58; al-Khamees, *al-Shaafi'iyyah*, pp. 23-28 and 44-61; al-Khamees, *al-Hanaabilah*, pp. 13-26 and 34-57.

Table 1. Summary of al-Khamees' Study Concerning Forbidden Acts that are Means to *Shirk*

Action	Hanafi School	Maliki School	Shafi'ee School	Hanbali School
Plastering the Grave	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden
Elevating graves	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden
Building on graves	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden
Writing on graves	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden
Taking graves as mosques	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden
Lighting gravesites	Forbidden	N/A	Forbidden	Forbidden
Facing graves while supplicating	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden	Forbidden
Making a grave a festival site	Forbidden	N/A	N/A	N/A
Undertaking a journey to graves	N/A	Forbidden	N/A	Forbidden
Praying or prostrating on a grave	N/A	Forbidden	N/A	Forbidden
Circumam-bulating graves	N/A	N/A	Forbidden	Forbidden
Sitting on graves	N/A	N/A	Forbidden	Forbidden
Kissing graves	N/A	N/A	Forbidden	Forbidden

N/A = Al-Khamees did not discuss any explicit judgment made by this school regarding this topic.

VIII
Conclusions

The Importance and Necessity of Returning to the Pure and Original Teachings of Islam

Allah says,

وَأَنَّ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطِى مُسْتَقِيمًا فَٱتَّبِعُوهُ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا۟ ٱلسُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِۦ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّىٰكُم بِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

"And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not (other) paths, for they will separate you away from His Path. This He has ordained for you that you may become pious" (*al-Anaam* 153). Allah has thus announced that there is His path and there are other paths that divert one from His path. Anyone with true faith will desire with great intensity to follow that one true path. That one path, obviously, is the path laid out in Allah's revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), comprising both the Quran and the Sunnah.

It is part of the great mercy of Allah upon the Muslim Nation—a feature that distinguishes this Nation from that of all of the previous prophets—that Allah promised to preserve the revelation to the final Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Allah says,

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَٰفِظُونَ

"Verily We: It is We Who have sent down the *Dhikr* and surely, We will guard it (from corruption)" (*al-Hijr* 9).[1] Thus the message will always be preserved. To find the truth, it is simply a matter of turning to that message sincerely and understanding it in the proper way, the way in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

[1] This verse implies a preservation of the entire message received by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), that is, inclusive of both the Quran and Sunnah.

practiced and propagated it. But beyond that, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also stated that there shall always be people who are along that path of truth. The Messenger said,

لا يزالُ من أُمتي أُمةٌ قَائمةٌ بِأَمرِ الله لا يضرهم من خذَلَهم ولا من خالَفَهم حتى يأْتيهم أمر الله وهم علَى ذَلك

"A group from my Nation will always remain obedient to Allah's orders, and they will not be harmed by those who abandon them nor those who oppose them, until the command of Allah comes while they are [still] in that state." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

That group that adheres to the Straight Path may be small or it may be large. Regardless of its numbers, the important point is that they are following the path that is pleasing to Allah. In fact, the pleasure of Allah is their ultimate goal. Hence, those who forsake them and those who openly oppose them cannot bring them any true harm whatsoever since they are on the path of ultimate happiness.

The above, in a way, summarizes the message and teachings of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

The Concept of *Tajdeed* ("Revivalism")

Although, as noted above, a group of the entire Muslim Nation may always be following the truth, the situation of the Muslim Nation as a whole has certainly been one of ebb and flow. Attachment to the Quran and Sunnah has been strong at times and has waned at other times. However, as Allah has promised to preserve this message, there has never been and there never will be, Allah willing, a time when the message is completely lost or destroyed. To the contrary, Allah has also promised to raise individuals among this Nation that will work to revive it and strive to bring it back to its true teachings. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has mentioned this fact in his well-known hadith,

إِن الله يبعثُ لهذه الأُمة علَى رأْسِ كُلِ مائَة سنة من يجدد لَها دينها

"Indeed, at the head of every century, Allah shall raise for this Nation one who will revive its religion for them."[1]

It is relevant here to speak in the light of this hadith. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab clearly attempted to propagate and revive the true teachings of Islam. Hence many have asked the question: Should Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhaab be considered a *mujaddid* (an individual bringing the Muslims back to the true teachings of the Quran and Sunnah)? It has been the conclusion of many scholars that he was indeed a *mujaddid* (revivalist). Abdul Rahmaan ibn Qaasim wrote, "The contemporaneous leaders of the time of the Shaikh attested to his knowledge and reckoned him among the number of *mujaddid*s who revived what the Messenger of the Lord of the Worlds brought. Similarly, the people of Egypt, Greater Syria, Iraq, Makkah, Madinah, India and other places attest to the same."[2] Muhammad Rasheed Ridha and Abdul Mutaal al-Saeedi, in his book *al-Mujaddidoon fi al-Islaam,* explicitly considered him a *mujaddid*.[3]

However, even when recognizing that he was indeed a *mujaddid* (Allah willing), it is important to note to what extent he truly contributed to the revival of this religion, a revival that one could argue is still continuing today. In an interesting passage, Abdul Hamid Siddiqi wrote,

> Many critics of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab condemn this movement as retrogressive. But this is an absolutely baseless charge. Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab stood up with determination to bring his people back to true Islam. He, therefore, tried to purge Muslim life of all innovations and declared a "holy war" against them. The feeling which he voiced was rather one of rationalistic dissatisfaction with the outworn palimpsest of cults than of the destruction of everything that he found before him. He wanted to separate grain from chaff and this work he performed with admirable courage and alertness of mind. He tried to demolish all those things which he found alien to the spirit of Islam and weeded out all those practices from Muslim society which he considered antagonistic to the spirit of the faith. He rightly believed

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[1] Recorded by Abu Dawood, al-Haakim, al-Baghdaadi and al-Baihaqi in his *Marifah*. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 382. In addition, al-Sakhaawi and al-Ajalooni also confirm that its chain is *sahih*. See Abdul Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 6, fn. 1; Usrah, p. 4, fn. 2.

[2] Quoted in Abdul Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, pp. 6-7.

[3] Cf., Abdul Muhsin ibn Baaz, vol. 1, p. 7.

> that a certain amount of change is always essential in a living civilization, but the change should be organic, that is to say, it should come from within that civilization in response to the genuine needs of the society which claims to own it and should not be a mere imitation of another civilization... The Shaikh, therefore, was very cautious about his decisions. He persuaded the people to discard only those things which he found un-Islamic, while he readily accepted the ideas and practices which could be fitted into the structure of Islam.
>
> The Wahhabi movement is, therefore, not essentially retrograde and conservative in its nature. It is progressive in the sense that it not only awakened the Arabs to the most urgent need of heart-searching and broke the complacency to which they had been accustomed for years, but also gave the reformers a definite line of action. It taught them that for the revival of Islam it was necessary to give up second-hand formulas and sterile conventions, and that it was equally essential to come back to the realities of Islam and build only on the bases of these solid rocks new modes of thought and action.[1]

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's Motivation

Saalih al-Atram noted that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab was living in a situation much like the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself, wherein most of the people were dedicated to acts of ignorance and idolatry and only a small number of people were still dedicated to the true religion of their ancestor Abraham. The society, obviously, was dominated by what the majority did. Al-Atram states that from this background one can understand what was the motivation of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab: to take the people back to the knowledge of Allah and to keep them from the greatest thing that Allah had prohibited, *shirk*. Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab could not remain quiet in such a setting. His knowledge and his faith drove him to act. It drove him to try to save those poor people who were following the devil and their desires.

After that introduction, Al-Atram then lists eleven motivating factors that led ibn Abdul-Wahhaab to follow the course that he followed.[2] It must be noted, though, that he does not support his claim

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[1] Siddiqi, vol. 2, p. 1447.
[2] Al-Atram, vol. 1, pp. 266-267.

by, for example, quotes from ibn Abdul-Wahhaab showing that these were indeed his motivating factors. However, an overall reading of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's writings and his life demonstrates that many, if not all, of these factors were probably on ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's mind. Furthermore, no one but Allah truly knows what is any individual's true intention and motivations. However, the eleven factors that al-Atram mentions are important factors that may also encourage the readers to take on the role and tremendous job that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab fulfilled in his life. It is for this reason that they are being reproduced here. The Muslim Nation is in need of strong leaders and motivating scholars who can further take on the role began by ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's reforms and these eleven points should be strong motivating factors for anyone who has true faith in his heart.

Al-Atram's eleven factors that motivated ibn Abdul-Wahhaab's deeds and accomplishments are:

(1) To fulfill his Lord's command to His messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his followers:

قُلْ هَٰذِهِۦ سَبِيلِىٓ أَدْعُوٓا۟ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ ۚ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا۠ وَمَنِ ٱتَّبَعَنِى ۖ وَسُبْحَٰنَ ٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أَنَا۠ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ

"Say (O Muhammad), 'This is my way; I invite unto Allah with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me with sure knowledge. And Glorified and Exalted be Allah. And I am not of the polytheists'" (*Yoosuf* 108).

(2) To extol Allah and declare Him free of all that is becoming of Him, as in the verse above,

وَسُبْحَٰنَ ٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أَنَا۠ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ

"And Glorified and Exalted be Allah. And I am not of the polytheists" (*Yoosuf* 108).

(3) To rescue himself from the loss and perdition that is decreed for mankind—save for those who fulfill the conditions mentioned in the *soorah*,

وَٱلۡعَصۡرِ ۝ إِنَّ ٱلۡإِنسَٰنَ لَفِي خُسۡرٍ ۝ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ وَتَوَاصَوۡاْ بِٱلۡحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوۡاْ بِٱلصَّبۡرِ

"Verily, mankind is in loss except those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth, and recommend one another to patience" (*al-Asr* 1-3).

(4) To acquire the virtues of calling others to Allah, as stated in the verse,

وَمَنۡ أَحۡسَنُ قَوۡلٗا مِّمَّن دَعَآ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحٗا وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ ٱلۡمُسۡلِمِينَ

"Who is better in speech than one who calls (people) to Allah, works righteousness, and says, 'I am of those who bow in Islam?'" (*Fussilat* 33).

(5) To fulfill the demands of the Prophet's statement,

لا يؤمن أحدكم حتى يحب لأخيه ما يحب لنفْسِه

"None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

(6) Out of mercy to those people, keeping them from being cast by the devil into the Fire, fulfilling the direction of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said,

ارحموا من في الأرضِ يرحمكُم من في السماءِ

"Have mercy to those on earth and the One who is in the heaven will have mercy on you."[1]

(7) Out of hope to attain what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) described when he said,

فَوالله لَأَنْ يهدى بِك رجلٌ واحد خير لَك من حمرِ النعمِ

"By Allah, if one person is guided through you, it is better for you than the best type of camels." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

(8) Out of seeking the excellence that is mentioned by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the hadith,

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[1] Recorded by Abu Dawood and al-Tirmidhi. According to al-Albani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, vol. 2, p. 180.

خيركُم من تعلم القُرآنَ وعلمه

"The most excellent of you is he who learns the Quran and teaches it." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

(9) To fulfill the Prophet's command,

بلغوا عني ولَو آيةً

"Convey from me even if it be just one verse." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

(10) To receive a portion of the following supplication made by the servants of Allah:

وَٱجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

"And make us leaders for the truly pious" (*al-Furqaan* 74).

(11) To implement Allah's command,

ٱدْعُ إِلَىٰ سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِٱلْحِكْمَةِ وَٱلْمَوْعِظَةِ ٱلْحَسَنَةِ ۖ وَجَٰدِلْهُم بِٱلَّتِى هِىَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن ضَلَّ عَن سَبِيلِهِۦ ۖ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِٱلْمُهْتَدِينَ

"Invite (mankind) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided" (*al-Nahl* 125).

Final Words

Jameelah wrote, "Upon the progeny of such Mujaddids as Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab depend not only Islam's renaissance but its very survival."[1] In reality, ibn Abdul-Wahhaab opened the minds of the believers and brought them back to the true revelation of Allah. This is the real danger of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab for those who opposed and oppose him. He truly opened people's minds and made them think about the way of life that they were following: Was it the true way of life? Does it meet their purpose in this life? Was it consistent with the Quran and Sunnah? And this thought

[1] Jameelah, p. 124.

process should lead to action—the willingness to implement what one believes at all cost and to sacrifice for it.

Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab brought about change by emphasizing the very basics of the faith. The basis of the religion is the true monotheism (*tauheed*). This is the one thing that is constant from the time of Adam until the end of mankind. It does not change for time, place or people, All the messengers came with the same essential message. It is associating partners with Allah (*shirk*)—in all of its manifestations, ancient or modern—which is the deviation from the true course and the real deviancy. When this point is understood properly, it permeates the individual, the family and the complete society. There is a complete change. The aspirations, the goals, the dreams and actions of the individual and the society are transformed. The soul desires to be purified, the heart yearns to become pure. The heart seeks to be lit with the light of true knowledge. Allah becomes most beloved, most feared. Nothing else enters the heart in that fashion. The religion comes first. Sacrifice follows. Allah's blessings and victory are soon to come. This is the message that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) brought to mankind and this was the message that ibn Abdul-Wahhaab revived in this Muslim Nation. May Allah continue to strengthen this religion and bring people back to the path that is pleasing to Him.

Glossary

Ahl al-sunnah wa al-Jamaah (أهل السنة وا ماعة) - "The People of the Sunnah and the Congregation," this refers to those people who follow the way of the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the way of his Companions with respect to beliefs and deeds or a general application of the religion of Islam.

Ameer (أم) - leader; often used for the head of a tribe or city-state

Aqeedah, al- (العقيدة) – creed, beliefs, belief methodology

Ashaairah, al- (الأشـاعرة) - These are the supposed followers of Abu-l-Hasan al-Ashari (260-324 A.H.). This group is known for making *taweel* for many of the attributes of Allah. They also believe that *imaan* is solely *tasdeeq*.

Asharites - a common Western term for the *Ashaairah*

Asmaa, al- wa al-sifaat (الأ اء والـصفات) - names and attributes; *al-asmaa* are names and *al-sifaat* are attributes

Badr (بدر) - the sight of the first major battle between the Prophet's followers and the Quraish. Those Companions who participated in that battle are especially distinguished because the Muslims were a very small number and the going to that battle was not considered an obligatory act.

Bidah (بدعة) - innovation, heresy

Dawah (دعوة) - propagating Islam, calling others to the religion of Islam; reference to one's teachings or message as a whole

Deen (دين) - complete way of life, religion

Dhikr (ذكر) - words of remembrance of Allah

Dua (دعاء) - supplication, informal prayer

Eid (عيد)- these are the Islamic festivals or holidays. One occurs after the fast of the month of Ramadhaan is completed and the other occurs after the completion of the pilgrimage.

Fatwa (فتوى) - ruling given by a scholar concerning a religious matter, usually based on *ijtihaad*

Fiqh (فقه) - jurisprudence, law

Fitnah (فتنة) - trial, temptation

Hajj (حج) - the pilgrimage to Makkah that one must perform once in one's life if one has the means to do so.

Halaal (حلال) - permissible; opposite of *haraam*

Haraam (حرام), commonly *haram* - forbidden; opposite of *halaal*.

Hasan (حسن)- this is a verified hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) although it is not as strong as *sahih*.

Hijrah (هجرة) - lit., "emigration, migration," when used in the expression, "Year of the *hijrah*," it is a reference to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) migration

from Makkah to Madinah that marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar; it also refers to boycotting or avoiding one another.

Hikmah (حكمة) - literally, wisdom; in numerous verses in the Quran, it is in specific reference to the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

Hudood, al- (الحدود) - the prescribed legal punishments for specific crimes.

Ibaadah (عبادة) - "worship," in the Islamic sense, it includes more than the ritual acts but all acts done for the sake of Allah can be considered acts of worship.

Ibn (ابن) - "son of"

Ijmaa (إجماع) – consensus; the authority in Islamic law wherein all the scholars have come to an agreement on an issue

Ijtihaad (اجتـهاد)- the use of personal reasoning to determine what is correct from the *Shareeah*'s point of view.

Ilaah (إله) - god, worshipped one, adored one

Ilm al-kalaam (علم الكلام) - scholastic theology

Imaam (إمام) - leader in prayer, general leader, scholar

Imaan (إيمان) - "faith, belief" which also implies acting upon it

Islaam, Islam (الإسـلام) - this implies submission, such as submission to Allah; it is also the word for the religion as a whole.

Jaahiliyyah, al- (الجاهلية) - the period or time of ignorance; in particular, it refers to the time before the coming of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), however it can be used for any time that shares the same essential characteristics of ignorance or negligence of God's laws.

Jahmites - a common Western term for the *Jahmiyyah*

Jahmiyyah, al- (الجهمية) - the followers of Jahm ibn Safwaan, who was killed for his beliefs by the Muslim ruler. He virtually denied all of Allah's attributes. He claimed that *imaan* is simply a matter of having knowledge that Allah exists.

Jihad (جهـاد) - to exert oneself, strive, struggle; in particular in fiqh, it refers to fighting against the unbelievers in order to spread the word of Allah.

Kaabah (كعبة) - the House of Allah in Makkah to which the Hajj is made.

Kaafir (كافر) - a disbeliever

Kashf (كـشف) - "spiritual unveiling," where truths are mystically revealed to one's heart; mostly emphasized by Sufis

Khaleefah (خليفـة) - the leader of the Muslim nation, often referred to as "caliph" in English

Kharijites - a common Western term for the *Khawaarij*

Khawaarij, al- (الخـوارج) - one of the first heretical groups in the history of Islam. Known for their extremist views, they even declared the caliphs Uthman and Ali disbelievers. They believed that anyone who commits a major sin falls out of the fold of Islam. The Prophet (peace be upon him) prophesied their coming and stated that they should be fought.

Khutbah (خطبة) - address, speech; in particular, the speech given by the Imam at the Friday Prayer is called a *khutbah*

Kufr (كفر) - disbelief, the opposite of *imaan*.

La ilaaha illa-llah (لا إله إلا الله) - "There is none worthy of worship except Allah"

Maaturidiyyah, al- (ا اتريديـة) - The followers of Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d. 333 A.H.). This group is very close to the Ashaariyyah in their beliefs.

Madhhab (مذهب)- basically this refers to a person's school of thought or opinion.

Maturidites - a common Western term for the *Maaturidiyyah*

Muamalaat (معاملات) - worldly transactions, as opposed to ritual acts of worship

Mufti (مفـ) - one who issues *fatwa*s

Mujaahid (اهد) - one who makes jihad

Mujtahid (تهد) - one who exercises *ijtihaad* or personal, scholarly reasoning

Murjiah, al- (ا رجئـة) - an early sect in the history of Islam and an opponent to the Khawaarij; they went to the opposite extreme concerning *imaan* and claimed that even the biggest sinner is a complete and perfect believer.

Murjiites - A common Western term for the *Murjiah*

Mushrik (مشرك) - those who commit *shirk* (associate partners with Allah)

Mushrikeen (مشرك) - plural of *mushrik*

Muslim (مسلم) - one who submits

Mutawaatir (متواتر) - something narrated in such a way, such as by so many people in each generation, that there is no question about its correctness and authenticity

Mutawwa (مطوع) – a common term from before the time of ibn Abdul-Wahhaab; it refers to a semi-educated or volunteer worker for the sake of Islam, encouraging others to do what is right

Mutazilah, al- (ا عتزلـة) - an early heretical group in the history of Islam. They were greatly responsible for the spread of Greek thinking among the Muslims. Among their beliefs was that the *faasiq* was neither a believer nor a disbeliever but he would be in the Hell-fire forever.

Najd (د) – literally, "steppes, plateau"; the land in Central Arabia where ibn Abdul-Wahhaab hailed from.

Orientalists - non-Muslims who study or write about Islam

Qadariyyah, al- (القدرية) - the sect that denies the concept of *al-qadar*

Rabb (رب) - Lord, creator, one who nourishes and sustains

Rububiyyah, al- (الربوبية) - Related to the *rabb* (lord and creator)

Sahih (صحيح)- this is an authentic or verified hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Sahih al-Bukhari (صـحيح البخـاري) - the most authentic compilation of hadith; compiled by Imam al-Bukhari.

Sahih Muslim (صحيح مـسلم) - the second most authentic compilation of hadith; compiled by Imam Muslim.

Salaat (صـلاة), also commonly *salat* - the Islamic ritual prayer; literally, it means supplication

Salaf, al- (الـسلف) - the first three generation of Muslims, in particular, the Companions, and those who follow their path

Salafi (سلفي) - one adhering to the way of the *salaf*

Shahaadah (شهادة) - "testimony," herein it refers to the testimony of faith, "I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

Shaikh (شيخ) - religious leader, scholar or respected person, also used for Sufi leaders; traditionally used for the leader of a Bedouin tribe (as opposed to *ameer* which was usually used for the head of the city-states)

Shareeah (شريعة)- Islamic law.

Shiah (شيعة) - a sectarian group founded years after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him); they claim that Ali ibn Abu Taalib should have been the first caliph instead of Abu Bakr; and they claim to be the followers of the descendants of Ali

Shiites – Western term for *Shiah*

Shirk (شرك)- the associating of partners with Allah.

Soorah (سورة), also commonly *Surah* - a "chapter" of the Quran

Sufis - these are the groups among Muslims that emphasize mystical practices, remembrance of Allah and other aspects.

Sunnah (سنة) - practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Sunni (سني) – one on the path of the *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* (see above).

Surah (سورة)- this is a "chapter" from the Quran.

Taaghoot (طاغوت) - false god or false object of worship

Tafseer (تفسير) - Quranic commentary and exegesis.

Taqleed (تقليد) – following; most often used while referring to the "blind obedience" to a particular school of fiqh or scholar

Tawassul (توسل) – seeking a means of approach; for example, one refers to one's good deeds done sincerely for Allah's sake while praying to Allah in hopes that such will lead Allah to accept one's prayers

Tauheed, al- (also, *tawheed, tawhid, tauhid*) (التوحيد) - Islamic monotheism

Tauheed al-Asmaa wa al-Sifaat, al- (التوحيد الأسماء والصفات) - *tauheed* of Allah with respect to His names and attributes; He is the only one who possesses His perfect, complete and majestic attributes.

Tauheed al-Ruboobiyah, al- (التوحيد الربوبية) - the *tauheed* of Allah with respect to His Lordship and His actions, such as He is the only creator, the only sustainer, the only one who maintains and nourishes the creation and so forth.

Tauheed al-Uloohiyah, al- (التوحيد الألوهية) - the *tauheed* of Allah with respect to His Godhood; in other words, He is the only God and the only one worthy of worship and, hence, He is the only one that a person should take as his God and object of worship.

Uff (أف) - a slight word of rebuke

Uluhiyyah (ألوهية) - related to the *ilaah* (God, worshipped one)

Ummah (أمة) - "nation, people," it refers either to the Muslim nation or the people who have been addressed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which would be all of mankind from his time until the day of Judgment.

Umrah (عمرة) - the “lesser pilgrimage” that contains less rites than Hajj and may be performed throughout the year.

Zakat (زكاة) - one of the five pillars of Islam; it is the portion of one’s wealth that one must give away for the sake of Allah to certain people as specified in the Quran.

Zina (زنا) - illegal sexual intercourse; fornication

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